24th EDITION

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EMERGING MARKETS

Year Book 2025

Middle East ✈ Africa ✈ South Asia

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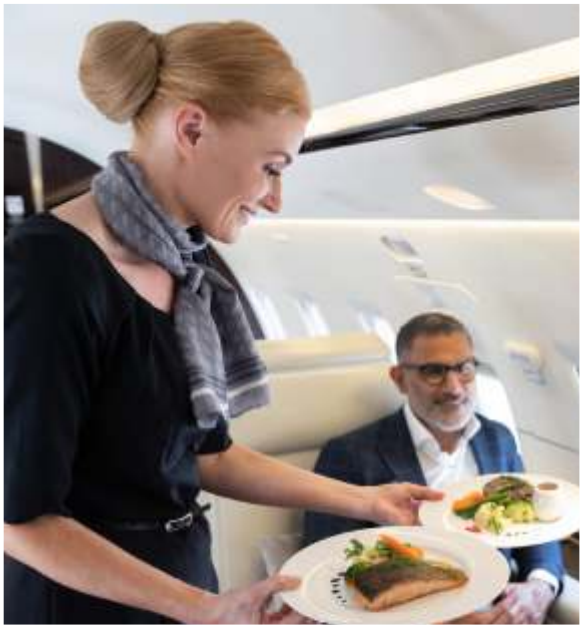

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Aviation Guide™ Year Book 2025

EMERGING MARKETS

Middle East ✈ Africa ✈ South Asia

A warm welcome to the 24th edition of Aviation Guide dedicated to the emerging markets of the Middle East, Africa, South Asia, and beyond.

A massive 9.5 billion passengers traveled in 2024, according to the Airports Council International, the organization that represents more than 2000 airports worldwide.

The 2024 passenger traffic figure surpasses the pre-pandemic level and a far cry from the pandemic era in 2020 when the aviation industry faced an unprecedented decline of 5.5 billion passengers due to travel restrictions and lockdowns.

Surely, this encouraging figure indicates a full recovery from an industry that was nearly crippled by an invisible enemy that killed millions of people around the world, which also disrupted businesses and the lives of countless others.

The aviation industry has made significant progress since the depths of the pandemic. While challenges remain, the sector is demonstrating resilience and adaptability. The recovery is ongoing, and the future of aviation is bright, driven by innovation, a focus on sustainability, and the enduring human desire to connect.

This is the era of seamless connectivity, advanced analytics, automation, innovation, and new ideas all rolled into one.

Our deepest gratitude to all of you who provided invaluable information and support to this project year after year.

As has been our tradition, we bring you this year the latest B2B database on airlines, airports, MRO, helicopters, ground handling services, aviation safety and security, aircraft charter, and leasing, among many other industries linked to aviation.

Errors and omissions inadvertently committed in compiling this voluminous edition, if any, are regretted. Ideas and suggestions are most welcome.

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Editor's Note

The Indispensable Role of Aviation and Air Cargo in Our World

In an age defined by globalization and interconnectedness, aviation stands as an unsung hero, silently propelling our world forward. While often associated with leisure and travel, the true might of aviation lies in its crucial role in facilitating global trade, economic development, and humanitarian aid.

Air cargo, in particular, forms the invisible threads that weave the global economy together. It's the silent partner ensuring that your next-day delivery arrives on time, that life-saving medicines reach remote corners of the world, and that vital components power industries across continents. Consider this: air cargo accounts for approximately 35% of world trade by value, despite representing only a fraction of the volume.

This underscores the importance of speed and reliability in today's fast-paced world, where time-sensitive goods and high-value products demand the efficiency that only air transport can provide.

Beyond the realm of commerce, aviation plays a pivotal role in connecting people and cultures. It bridges geographical divides, fostering understanding and collaboration. It facilitates tourism, enabling exploration of far-flung destinations and contributing significantly to local economies.

In times of crisis, aviation becomes a lifeline, delivering essential aid and personnel to disaster-stricken areas, showcasing its humanitarian significance.

Looking to the future, the aviation industry is poised for transformation. Technological advancements are reshaping the skies, with innovations like sustainable aviation fuels and electric aircraft promising a greener future. Drones are emerging as game-changers in last-mile delivery, offering efficient and cost-effective solutions. The integration of artificial intelligence and big data is optimizing operations, enhancing safety, and improving the passenger experience.

Challenges remain, however, in many fronts. There's the challenge of economic uncertainly as global economic headwinds, including inflation and potential recessions, pose a threat to aviation's full recovery. Consumer spending on travel could be impacted by economic downturns.

Geopolitical Risks: Conflicts and geopolitical instability can disrupt air travel and impact airline operations. The war in Ukraine, for instance, has had a significant impact on air travel in Europe and beyond.

Operational Challenges: Airlines continue to face operational challenges, including staff shortages, air traffic control disruptions, and airport congestion. These issues can lead to flight delays and cancellations, impacting passenger satisfaction.

Fuel Prices: Fluctuating fuel prices remain a significant cost factor for airlines. The industry is vulnerable to price spikes, which can impact profitability.

The industry must also address its environmental footprint, requiring investing in sustainable practices and technologies to mitigate its impact on the planet.

But despite these challenges, the future of aviation looks bright bright. As our world becomes increasingly interconnected, the demand for efficient and reliable air transport will only grow. Aviation will continue to be a driving force behind global trade, economic development, and cultural exchange. It will remain an indispensable part of our lives, connecting us in ways we often take for granted.

So, the next time you see a plane soaring through the sky, remember that it's not just a machine. It's a symbol of human ingenuity, a testament to our desire to connect, and a vital component of the world we live in.

Gemma Q. Casas
Editor-in-Chief

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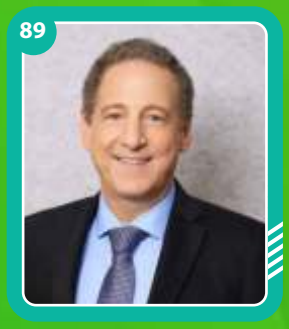
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HH Sheikh Ahmed Bin Saeed Al Maktoum

President, Dubai Civil Aviation Authority (DCAA)
Chairman of Dubai Airports
Chairman and CEO, Emirates Airline & Group, dnata

Sheikh Ahmed embarked on his career in the aviation industry in 1985 when he was appointed President of the Dubai Department of Civil Aviation (DCA) – the governing body that oversaw the activities of Dubai International (DXB) and Dubai Duty Free, among others.

In that same year Emirates – Dubai's international airline was launched with Sheikh Ahmed as its Chairman. He is now the Chairman and Chief Executive of Emirates Airline & Group, which includes dnata – one of the world's leading providers of air and travel services, and other aviation related entities.

Award-winning Emirates is one of the world's most recognized airline brands with a global footprint across six continents, connecting guests and facilitating global trade. The airline operates one of the most modern, young and efficient fleets of spacious and comfortable Airbus A380 and Boeing 777 aircraft.

Under his leadership, Emirates has been profitable for over 30 years. A trusted partner for over 300 airline customers worldwide, dnata offers ground handling, cargo, travel, catering and retail services in more than 35 countries across six continents. In the financial year 2023, dnata handled 712,383 aircraft turns, moved 2.7 million tons of cargo, uplifted more than 111.4 million meals and recorded a total transaction value (TTV) of travel service of $1.9 billion.

Dubai Duty Free has become one of the biggest single airport retail operations in the world with annual sales US$2.16 billion in 2023.

Under Sheikh Ahmed's leadership, the DCA underwent an organizational restructuring in April 2007. This led to the creation of the Dubai Civil Aviation Authority (DCAA) as the local regulatory body, and Dubai Airports as the operator of Dubai's airports – DXB and Dubai World Central – Al Maktoum International (DWC). Following the restructuring, Sheikh Ahmed became the President of DCAA and Chairman of Dubai Airports.

The fact that Dubai is now firmly established as the region's leading tourist destination and business, trade and transport hub, is due in no small measure to Sheikh Ahmed's efforts. Under his leadership, DXB has developed into the world's busiest airport for international guests and among the largest cargo hubs with a network of more than 250 destinations across 104 countries served by more than 100 international airlines.

This was enabled by the hub's timely and progressive expansion, including the opening of DXB's Terminal 3 in October 2008; the opening of Concourse A, the world's first purpose-built A380 facility in early 2013 and the opening of the $1.2 billion Concourse D in February 2016.

flydubai was established in 2008 to support Dubai's thriving aviation hub, with Sheikh Ahmed as the Chairman. Since its launch, flydubai has been committed to creating free flows of trade and tourism; enabling more people to travel to more places more often. Over 14 years of operations, flydubai has built a network of more than 115 destinations, 77 of which were previously underserved or had very few direct air links to Dubai. Today, flydubai is the second-largest carrier operating out of DXB and has enabled more than 80 million passengers to travel conveniently across the region. The carrier operates one of the youngest and most efficient fleets in the skies with more than 70 Boeing 737 aircraft.

In January 2019 Sheikh Ahmed received the Honorary Sash of Mohammed Bin Rashid from His Highness Sheikh Mohammed bin Rashid Al Maktoum, the Vice President and Prime Minister of the UAE, and Ruler of Dubai. This was for winning the Mohammed Bin Rashid Al Maktoum Government Excellence Award for his leadership in aviation.

Outside of aviation, Sheikh Ahmed holds several government positions and plays an increasingly pivotal role in leading the emirate's finance and energy sectors.

In November 2019, Sheikh Ahmed was appointed to temporarily oversee Dubai Holding and Meraas, and in June 2020 Meraas merged under the umbrella of Dubai Holding with Sheikh Ahmed as the Chairman.

In January 2020, Sheikh Ahmed was appointed to the newly formed Dubai Council as the Commissioner General of Dubai Economy pillar to oversee the Department of Economic Development, Department of Tourism and Commerce Marketing, and Dubai's free zones, airports, ports and customs. In November 2021, the Department of Economic Development and the Department of Tourism and Commerce Marketing were merged, resulting in the establishment of the Department of Economy and Tourism (DET).

Sheikh Ahmed is also Chancellor of the Mohammed Bin Rashid University of Medicine and Health Sciences, a position he has held since 2016.

Despite his numerous business commitments, Sheikh Ahmed is patron to many charitable organizations. He has also received numerous accolades from various governments and multi-nationals.

Sheikh Ahmed has a bachelor's degree from the University of Denver, Colorado, USA. He is well known internationally for his contribution to the development of regional aviation. The Royal Aeronautical Society, one of the industry's oldest and most respected professional associations honored his achievements in aviation with a fellowship of the Society at the 1994 Farnborough Airshow, UK.

In May 2013, he was presented with an honorary Doctor of Science from City University London – Cass Business School in recognition of his outstanding leadership in the development of professional sectors including aviation, finance, banking and entrepreneurship in the UAE.

H.E. Abdulla Bin Touq Al Marri

Cabinet Member & UAE Minister of Economy
Chairman, UAE General Civil Aviation Authority

H.E. Abdulla Bin Touq Al Marri was appointed Minister of Economy of the United Arab Emirates (UAE) under the new government structure approved in July 2020.

He is also the Chairman of the General Civil Aviation Authority, UAE International Investors Council, and CSR UAE Fund's Board of Trustees.

Prior to his appointment, H.E. Al Marri held important positions in the government as a senior, top-ranking official. He was the Secretary General of the UAE Cabinet since 2017, during which he was instrumental in strengthening the interdependence between the federal and local governments.

In this role, he also spearheaded many initiatives to get the pulse of the people and know their sentiments, as well as build the UAE's long-lasting relations with international organizations such as the World Economic Forum.

Prior, he served as the head of Securities and Commodities Authority, and was also the former Director General of the Executive Office of H.H. Sheikh Mohammed bin Rashid Al Maktoum. He was part of the high-profile team that was behind the launch of 'Area 2071', the nucleus of the future envisioned in the UAE Centennial Plan 2071.

Furthermore, the UAE Minister of Economy, in his previous post, took part in the unveiling of the Hatta Economic Zone development project and the relaunching of the Mohammed Bin Rashid Center for Leadership Development.

In addition, he was the CEO of the Dubai Future Foundation, enabling him to play a vital role in the successful launch of Dubai 10X and other initiatives of national importance. The Dubai 10X initiative, in particular, aims to strengthen the emirate's bid to become the city of the future.

H.E. Al Marri is a member of the Boards of Directors of different federal entities. His memberships allow him to actively support the development of priority sectors in the country such as the Golden Visa initiative, which seeks to attract talented individuals from across the world.

The UAE Minister of Economy holds a Bachelor's degree in Civil Engineering from the University of Sheffield in the UK. He is also a graduate of the UAE Government Leaders Program and Mohammed Bin Rashid Center for Leadership Development.

H.E. Saif Mohammed Al Suwaidi

Director General, UAE GCAA

His Excellency Saif Mohammed Al Suwaidi has been serving as the Director General of the UAE General Civil Aviation Authority for nearly two decades, helping the country navigate its way to greater heights in the global aviation industry.

Under Al Suwaidi's leadership, the UAE aviation sector continues to grow and flourish, taking the lead in aviation reforms as well as embracing innovative ideas and technologies that benefit both the region and the rest of the world.

The recipient of the UAE Prime Minister's Medal for Best Director-General in the UAE in 2017, Al Suwaidi led the GCAA team in achieving unprecedented milestones in aviation.

In 2024, the Sheikh Zayed Air Navigation Center successfully surpassed one million air traffic movements in a single year, underscoring the UAE's essential role as a global aviation hub with its strategic location, advanced infrastructure, and efficient operational systems.

"Exceeding one million air traffic movements reflects the dedication and hard work of the team at the Sheikh Zayed Air Navigation Centre. This is a result of years of planning, innovation, and close collaboration with our partners in the aviation sector. With an average growth rate of 10.3% in 2024 compared to last year 2023, we remain committed to continuously enhancing our systems and services to uphold the highest standards of safety and efficiency, reflecting sustainable development and continued success in managing air traffic successfully and professionally," said Al Suwaidi.

The size of investments in the UAE's civil aviation sector was more than approximately one trillion dirhams, while the size of investments in the development and expansion of airports reached AED85 billion to accommodate over 300 million passengers annually, according to reports.

Al Suwaidi began his career in the aviation industry in 1983 as a UAE Air Force pilot. He held various senior management positions in the UAE Air Force, including as director of Air Force Operations, before he was tapped to lead GCAA, a federal autonomous body set-up to oversee all aviation-related activities in the UAE.

Al Suwaidi studied law at the Beirut Arab University in Lebanon. He also obtained two Master's degrees. He took his first Master's Degree at the Command and Staff College in Cairo, Egypt. He also studied in China for his second Master's degree, graduating in 2006 at the National Defense University in Beijing.

H.E. Ali Salim Al Midfa

Chairman of Sharjah Airport Authority

His Excellency Ali Salim Al Midfa is widely recognized as a leading figure and a trailblazer among Emirati aviation professionals, playing a pivotal role in advancing the UAE's aviation sector. With 26 years of expertise in airport management, he has been instrumental in shaping the industry's growth trajectory.

Appointed as Chairman of Sharjah Airport Authority and a member of Sharjah Executive Council under Emiri Decree No. (13) of 2014, issued on January 16, 2014, His Excellency has overseen remarkable progress at the airport. Under his leadership, Sharjah Airport has witnessed significant increases in passenger traffic, aircraft operations, and air freight volumes.

Currently, His Excellency leads the airport's ambitious expansion project, which involves a total investment of AED 2.4 billion. This development aims to increase the airport's annual capacity from 8 million to 25 million passengers, significantly enhancing the airport's infrastructure and service offerings.

In addition to his role at Sharjah Airport, Al Midfa holds numerous key positions within both local and international aviation organizations. In 2021, he was elected as the Second Vice President of the ACI Asia-Pacific & Middle East Regional Board. His Excellency also serves as Chairman of Sharjah Aviation Services Company (SAS), Chairman of Sharjah Airport Travel Agency (SATA), and Chairman of Dufry Sharjah.

Beyond aviation, His Excellency Ali Salim Al Midfa is an active member of various public and private organizations. He serves on the Supreme Committee for Human Resources in the Emirate of Sharjah, the Board of Directors of Sharjah Insurance Company, the Board of Trustees of Skyline University College, and the Sharjah Volunteering Committee.

H.E. Mohammed A. Ahli

CEO, Dubai Air Navigation Services (DANS)

H.E. Mohammed Abdulla Ahli commenced his aviation career in 1966 with dnata (Dubai National Air Travel Agency) and held several key positions leading to the position of Director, Ground Services.

In 1982, he moved to the Department of Civil Aviation, presently the Dubai Civil Aviation Authority, as the Operations Director, responsible for all Airport Operations and International Affairs. He represented the Federal Government at several high-level International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO) meetings, and played a key role in the establishment of the Airspace for the United Arab Emirates.

In addition to the enormous task of managing airport operations, Mr. Ahli also held the Chairmanship of Gulf Airport Services Association (GASA) with distinction for two years. He was an active member of the Arab Organization of Civil Aviation (AOCA) and was a member of Governing Board of ACI. He was also the Vice President of ACI–Asia Pacific Region and was a popular figure among International Airport Operators.

He was also instrumental in establishing the Executive Flight Services and Safety & Security Department in the DCA. His continued efforts to enhance the safety standards at the airport have been widely appreciated.

He is an ardent promotor of the "Open Skies Policy" and is strenuously working towards its implementation in the Gulf.

Mr. Ahli has been awarded the "ICAO scroll of Honor" in 2011, for his contribution in organizing and hosting the innovative International Civil Aviation Negotiation (ICAN) Conference held in Dubai in 2008.

He was appointed as the Chief Executive Officer at Dubai Air Navigation Services (dans), responsible for the provision of Air Traffic Services within Dubai Airspace in addition to his duties as the Director General of Dubai Civil Aviation Authority (DCAA).

H.E. Sheikh Mohammed bin Hamad bin Tahnoon Al Nahyan

Chairman, Board of Directors Abu Dhabi Airports
Chairman, ADQ Aviation & Aerospace
Chairman, Royal Jet

H.E. Sheikh Mohammed bin Hamad bin Tahnoon Al Nahyan, currently serving as the Advisor of Special Affairs at the Ministry of Presidential Affairs, is a distinguished leader in the aviation industry.

Since 2019, he has chaired the Board of Directors of Abu Dhabi Airports, playing a key role in its transformation into a global aviation leader. Additionally, he holds the positions of Chairman of ADQ Aviation & Aerospace and Chairman of Royal Jet.

Known for his visionary leadership, His Excellency spearheaded the inauguration of the new Terminal (A) at Zayed International Airport in November 2023. This state-of-the-art facility, boasting cutting-edge technological advancements, stands as one of the world's largest airport buildings. With its substantial capacity, it is capable of accommodating up to 45 million passengers annually.

Under his guidance, Abu Dhabi Airports has positioned the emirate as a world-class passenger and cargo hub, significantly contributing to its GDP.

Chairing both Royal Jet, a global leader in the premium aviation sector, and Global Aerospace Logistics (GAL), one of the leading providers of integrated aviation readiness solutions for military and civilian customers, exemplifies His Excellency's multifaceted dedication to advancing the industry.

Beyond his dedication to aviation, His Excellency is a renowned falcon enthusiast, actively participating in international events and exhibitions.

H.E. Dr. Ahmad Belhoul Al Falasi

Chairman, UAE Space Agency and Minister, UAE Ministry of Sports

His Excellency Dr. Al Falasi is the Chairman of the Board of Directors of the UAE Space Agency. He oversees the agency's mandate of guiding the space sector, ensuring its contribution to the national economy.

In July 2024, His Excellency Dr. Ahmad Belhoul Al Falasi was appointed UAE Minister of Sports. He oversees the process of devising development strategies and plans for the country's sports sector, aiming to boost its global competitiveness, nurture national talents and build a healthy society that adopts sports as a way of life.

Additionally, His Excellency is Chancellor of the Higher Colleges of Technology, the UAE's largest applied higher educational institution, and the nation's first approved university economic free zone. This enables the institution to produce graduates and entrepreneurs who possess exceptional levels of competence and competitiveness.

Since 2020, His Excellency has been the Deputy Chairman of the Emirates Development Bank, which is a key enabler of the UAE's economic transformation and provides financial support to businesses in key strategic sectors.

His Excellency Dr. Al Falasi was the UAE Minister of Education from 2022 to 2024. During his tenure, he oversaw the design and development of the national educational and pedagogical system, managing efforts to improve its efficiency and enhance the quality of outcomes to meet the country's future development, economic and social needs.

In 2021, His Excellency Dr. Al Falasi served as the Minister of State for Entrepreneurship and SMEs. He strengthened the role of the small and medium enterprises (SMEs) sector as a key driver of the national economy, boosting the national entrepreneurship model across various economic sectors in line with the best international practices.

From 2016 until 2020, His Excellency served as the Minister of State for Higher Education. During his tenure, he supervised the development of higher education and scientific research in the UAE, formulated new policies for the sector and streamlined the operations of higher education institutions to ensure high-caliber outputs that meet the needs of the labor market.

In October 2017, under the ministerial amendment to the UAE Government, Dr. Al Falasi took on the responsibility of equipping UAE nationals with future-orientated skills.

In parallel with his ministerial positions, His Excellency has also been the Chairman of the General Authority of Sports, responsible for setting plans, programs, systems, and regulations to ensure the organization and development of the sports sector in the country.

Through his position, His Excellency has contributed to implementing numerous strategic initiatives such as the National Sports Strategy 2031 and the launch of the Emirates Committee for Elite and High-Level Sports. The committee is one of the most significant initiatives resulting from the strategy, aiming to increase the likelihood that talented Emirati athletes will represent the UAE at the Paris 2024 Olympics. In June 2021, His Excellency Dr. Al Falasi was also appointed First Deputy President of the UAE National Olympic Committee, with the aim of improving the technical and administrative skills of the Olympic teams and enhancing the UAE's standing in regional and international sporting events.

From 2017 to 2020, His Excellency Dr. Al Falasi chaired the Board of Directors of the UAE Space Agency. During his tenure, the country witnessed the launch of the UAE Astronaut Programme, the first of its kind in the Arab region. As part of the programme, the first Emirati went on a space mission on September 25, 2019.

Additionally, KhalifaSat was launched as the first Arabic satellite to be 100 percent developed by Emirati engineers. The launch of the satellite was a historic achievement that contributed to cementing the UAE's global position in the space science sector. Furthermore, the "Probe of Hope" to Mars, lifted off on July 20, 2020, and reached the Red Planet in 2021.

His Excellency Dr. Al Falasi also served as the former Chairman of the Federal Authority for Human Resources (2017 – 2020). He is also the former Chairman of the UAE Tourism Council.

Prior to pursuing a career in the federal government, Dr. Al Falasi was the CEO of Masdar Company, the Executive Director of Strategy and Tourism Sector Development at Dubai Tourism, the Vice President of the Mubadala Industry Unit, as well as a consultant for the management consulting firm McKinsey & Company. He started his career as an Assistant Professor at Khalifa University.

H.E. Dr. Al Falasi holds a PhD from Monash University, a master's degree from the University of Melbourne in Australia, and a bachelor's degree in communication engineering from Khalifa University in the UAE.

H.E. Eng. Salem Butti Salem Al Qubaisi

Director General, UAE Space Agency

His Excellency Eng. Salem Butti Salem Al Qubaisi is the UAE Space Agency's Director General and has more than 20 years of public and private sector leadership experience in military aviation, security, and defense.

He is responsible for setting the Agency's strategic direction, delivering on its mandate to strengthen the space sector, and contributing to the nation's vision for sustainable economic growth and diversification.

Al Qubaisi joined the UAE Space Agency as Director General in September 2021. He served as a member of its board of directors from 2018, providing critical oversight on operations and major projects such as the Emirates Mars Mission.

Today, he leads the Agency's ambitious efforts to encourage the development of space science and advanced technologies, set relevant regulations, establish bilateral and multilateral partnerships, enhance national capabilities, and promote peaceful applications for deep space research.

Al Qubaisi formerly served as a board member with Abu Dhabi's Monitoring and Control Centre (ADMCC) from 2016. It followed five years with the National Commission of International Humanitarian Law under the UAE Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation.

Between 2011 and 2013, he was the Director of Nuclear Security at the Federal Authority of Nuclear Regulation, setting relevant regulations and overseeing licensing for commercial companies handling nuclear and radioactive material.

Prior to this, he spent five years with the US aerospace company, Lockheed Martin as a Technical Program Manager for the Ministry of Defense, where he worked on avionics, radar, weaponry, and technology targeting systems from 1999 and 2005.

Al Qubaisi has a Bachelor's degree in Electrical and Electronics Engineering from California State University, Sacramento, and a Master's degree in Electrical Engineering from the University of Texas, Arlington. He is also an honor graduate from Abu Dhabi's National Defense College, holding a Master's degree in Strategic and Security Studies.

H.E. Dr. Mohammed Al Zarooni

Executive Chairman, Dubai Integrated Economic Zones Authority
Dubai Airport Freezone
Dubai Silicon Oasis
Dubai CommerCity

With over 25 years of experience leading and developing free economic zones, H.E. Dr. Mohammed Al Zarooni is considered one of the world's top free zones influencing leaders. In 2021, H.E. Dr. Al Zarooni was appointed as Executive Chairman of Dubai Integrated Economic Zones Authority (DIEZ), holding three of Dubai's pioneering Free Zones, Dubai Airport Freezone, Dubai Silicon Oasis, and Dubai CommerCity.

In 2000, Dr. Al Zarooni was appointed Director-General of the Dubai Airport Freezone Authority (DAFZA), which, through his visionary leadership, quickly grew to become one of the top-performing free zones in the world.

In 2002, the Dubai Government appointed him as Vice Chairman and CEO of the Dubai Silicon Oasis Authority (DSOA), one of the region's most advanced and successful technology hubs.

In 1995, His Excellency joined the Dubai Civil Aviation Authority as Director of Research and Administration. At that time, he was one of the most prominent officials responsible for establishing the Dubai Airport Free Zone in 1996. Before joining the Department, he worked in the Ministry of Education for eight years.

In 2014, Dr. Al Zarooni was instrumental in conceptualizing and establishing the non-profit World Free Zones Organization. He is presently the chairman of this multilateral organization which acts as an association for all free zones worldwide. In 2015, he was appointed as the Secretary-General of the Dubai Free Zone Council.

A prominent personality in Dubai's economy, Dr. Al Zarooni is a member of the Dubai Economic Council. He also sits on several significant institutions' boards, including Dubai Aerospace Enterprise, Emirati Human Resources Development Council, and RIT Dubai Board of Directors. He is also the Chairman of Tradeling Board (a B2B ecommerce marketplace). Dr. Al Zarooni is an accomplished speaker on free zones and invited to address keynotes worldwide at numerous conferences and forums.

H.E. Dr. Mohammed Al Zarooni graduated with a Ph.D. Degree from the University of Durham in the U.K. His doctoral thesis was “The Position of the Free Zones in Economic Development.”

H.E. Dr. Shaikh Abdulla bin Ahmed Al Khalifa

Minister of Transportation and Telecommunications, Bahrain

H.E. Dr. Shaikh Abdulla bin Ahmed Al Khalifa is the Chairman of the Board of Trustees of the Bahrain Centre for Strategic, International and Energy Studies (Derasat) since 2017. In 2024, he was appointed Bahrain's Minister of Transportation and Telecommunications by royal decree.

In addition, he is the Chairman of the Board of Trustees of the King Hamad Global Centre for Peace and Coexistence since 2023 and previously held the position of Deputy Secretary General of the Supreme Defense Council from 2022 to 2024.

Dr. Al Khalifa's extensive experience in foreign affairs includes serving as Under Secretary for International Affairs at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs from 2015 to 2021 and subsequently as Under Secretary for Political Affairs from 2021 to 2024.

He holds a Bachelor of Laws (LLB) from Jordan's Applied Science University, a Master of Laws (LLM) from Queen Mary University of London, and a PhD in International Relations and Diplomacy from L'École des Hautes Études Internationales et Politiques in Paris.

H.E. Sheikh Mohammed bin Abdulla bin Mohammed Al Thani

Qatar Minister of Transport

H.E. Sheikh Mohammed bin Abdulla bin Mohammed Al Thani was appointed as Qatar Minister of Transport in November 2024.

His Excellency the Minister of Transport who has extensive experience in finance, governance, communications, and digital transformation, has overall responsibility for all Ministry of Transport issues, including:

- Regulating land, maritime and air transport in Qatar
- Developing and improving mobility and transport services, and studying their relevant projects and supervising their implementation

Earlier in his career, His Excellency Sheikh Mohammed served as a senior officer at the Qatar Armed Forces (General Headquarters).

He was then assigned to several leadership and executive positions in the Ooredoo Group, such as Deputy Chief Executive Officer of Ooredoo Group, Chief Executive Officer of Ooredoo Qatar, Chief Executive Officer of Ooredoo Kuwait, Chairman of the Board of Directors of Ooredoo Oman, Ooredoo Kuwait, Ooredoo Myanmar and Ooredoo Algeria.

His positions also included being the Vice Chairman of the Board of Directors of Asiacell Iraq, President Commissioner of Indosat Ooredoo, Board Member of both INJAZ Qatar and United Networks and member of the Qatar Association of Certified Public Accountants.

Education

H.E. Sheikh Mohammed bin Abdulla bin Mohammed Al Thani holds a Master of Science in Accounting and Finance from Cardiff University, Wales, the UK and a B.A. in Economics and Administrative Science, majored in accounting, from Qatar University.

He also holds certifications from the Leadership Program for Executives from the Qatar Leadership Centre including courses by Harvard Business School and HEC Paris, and from the Intensive Executive Breakthrough Program by Egon Zehnder and Mobius Executive Leadership.

Engr. Badr Mohammed Al-meer

Qatar Airways Group, Chief Executive Officer

Engr. Badr Mohammed Al-Meer took on the role of Group Chief Executive Officer at Qatar Airways Group on 5 November 2023.

His appointment underscores his distinguished career, forged over two decades, pioneering multibillion-dollar aviation, construction, and real estate development projects, while also reflecting Qatar's succession planning towards a new generation of leaders.

Throughout his career, Engr. Badr Mohammed Al-Meer has played pivotal roles in some of Qatar's most intricate and iconic development projects. Notably, he has served as the Chief Operating Officer of Hamad International Airport (HIA) since 2014, leading critical divisions such as MATAR (Airport Company), Qatar Duty Free, Qatar Aviation Services, Qatar Aircraft Catering Company, Qatar Distribution Center, Dhiafatina, and Real Estate.

While at HIA, he adeptly guided the airport through major milestones and challenges, such as the COVID-19 pandemic, the Expansion Project, and the pivotal FIFA World Cup 2022TM. His leadership also played an instrumental role in HIA being acclaimed as the Best Airport in the World, a testament to the strength and dedication of the entire team.

From 2018 to 2020, Engr. Badr Mohammed Al-Meer was a Board Director of the Airports Council International in the Asia/Pacific Region, contributing to Future Airport Development and Airport Sustainability.

Prior to his tenure at HIA, Engr. Badr Mohammed Al-Meer spent a decade with the United Development Company (UDC), ultimately rising to the position of Acting Chief Executive Officer. During this time, he oversaw the delivery of the Pearl Project, UDC's flagship venture, a renowned urban development in Qatar celebrated for its architectural design.

With engineering degrees from the American University of Beirut and the University of Colorado, Engr. Badr Mohammed Al-Meer brings a solid educational foundation and a wealth of business insights and technical expertise in engineering, construction, and large-scale project development.

In his new role as Group CEO, Engr. Badr Mohammed Al-Meer's track record of successful projects and expertise in aviation and project management uniquely positions him to lead Qatar Airways Group into an exciting new era, prioritizing innovation and cultivating a united and motivated workforce.

Hamdi Osman

Founder & CEO, SolitAir

Hamdi Osman is the Founder and Chief Executive Officer of SolitAir, a Dubai-based tech-driven air cargo carrier dedicated to middle-mile logistics that primarily connects the Global South to trade opportunities across the world.

A 34-year veteran of FedEx, whose illustrious career earned him the title Senior Vice-President of Operations for Europe, Middle East, Indian Subcontinent, Africa and Central Asia, before his retirement, Osman is considered one of the architects of the meteoric rise in the Middle East and Africa of FedEx, one of the world's biggest companies in the air transport and logistics industry.

No stranger to high stakes and hard work, the Egypt-born Osman began his career at FedEx in the United States in 1978, climbing up the corporate ladder, working in different countries and continents.

He later transitioned himself to a successful businessman and angel investor in various industries such as healthcare, education, F&B, hospitality and logistics, in the vibrant business landscape of Dubai. In 2024, Osman ventured into the growing air transport industry with SolitAir.

At an age when most people are content reflecting on their life's work and spending their pension and hard-earned earnings, Osman charted a new course, 30,000 feet above the ground, in the digital era.

"SolitAir was born out of a vision to connect underserved markets across the Global South, providing fast, reliable, and dedicated air freight services," says Osman, who believes that air cargo became the lifeline of the airline industry, during and after the pandemic. "I started receiving calls from colleagues and friends in the industry, asking if I could lend my expertise on the cargo side. That's when I began seriously reconsidering my involvement."

"As I took a closer look, I realized parts of the air cargo industry were fragmented, and some aspects were outright broken. With decades of experience, know-how, and a talented team that I've carefully assembled over the past six months - after dreaming about this for more than two and a half years - I felt we could make a real difference," added Osman who professionally played football for both Egypt and the United States in his younger years.

This is the story of a man who refuses to let adversities, convention, or competition ground him, soaring instead with a bold vision to connect the underserved corners of the world.

"Our mission is to revolutionize regional air cargo logistics by creating the first regional scheduled daily express cargo airline, connecting Africa, the GCC, the Indian Subcontinent, and the Stan countries. SolitAir is positioned as a technology-driven company with air transportation at its core, aiming to set new standards in the industry," said Osman.

Osman holds a Bachelor's degree in Physical Education from Helwan University, Cairo and a Master's degree in Business and Leadership from Boston University.

He has won many prestigious awards at FedEx in recognition of his leadership and distinguished performance in operations management, sales and customer service. He was equally recognized in the industry, receiving the first Middle East Logistic Personality of the Year – Air Cargo Division Award and the Arabian Business Investor of the Year.

Outside of work, Osman dedicates his time to philanthropic deeds and mentoring younger people who wish to venture into the vast transport industry or business.

At 70 years old, Osman's legacy is still unfolding, powered by passion and a refusal to play it safe. He's confident enough to navigate uncharted skies, whether in tech, or life itself.

Majid Saidgul Babasheikh Barzanji

Chairman, Executive Director & Co-founder, MATEEN Express
Executive Board Member, National Association of Freight & Logistics
Chairman, NAFL Courier & e-Commerce Subcommittee

Majid Saidgul Babasheikh Barzanji is the Chairman, Executive Director & Co-founder of MATEEN Express, a leading air cargo and express services company in Iraq and the Middle East.

Born in Erbil, in the oil-rich Kurdistan region of Iraq, Majid is known for his strong business acumen, his entrepreneurial spirit, and his commitment to serving customers with honesty and integrity. He is also a strong advocate for the development of the aviation industry in the Middle East.

A well-established family man, Majid is also known as a great motivator at work and in the air transport and logistics industry.

In 2015, Majid was elected as an Executive Board Member of the National Association of Freight and Logistics. He served for four years as Chairman of the Airfreight Subcommittee. In 2019, he was re-elected to his post and was selected to Chair NAFL's Courier & e-Commerce Subcommittee.

A graduate of BSc in Electrical and Telecommunications Engineering, Majid briefly worked in Iraq in the field of Power Generation Systems. He later moved to the UAE where he joined IBA Abu Dhabi, a leading MEP Consulting Engineering firm for about two years.

Seeing a substantial geopolitical shift in Iraq, Majid left his engineering career by mid-2001 to establish the family's first company in Dubai, ushering the birth of MATEEN Express in the UAE, Iraq, and Kurdistan, simultaneously. The company later expanded its operations to China and Turkey, with a self-grown network of trusted partners across the world.

Under Majid's leadership, MATEEN Express has grown to become one of the leading companies in the industry, with a network of offices in over 10 countries.

MATEEN is known for carrying out the first air transportation for commercial shipment to Baghdad Airport and the first commercial cargo flight landing at Erbil Airport in the Kurdistan Region.

Recognizing the significance of scheduled freighter service, MATEEN later developed charter flight operations into weekly schedules in early 2006, using AN-12, then IL-76, and both Soviet-era military transport aircraft.

Majid was also the first to operate scheduled western freighters commercially to Iraq, starting with DC8-63F, A300ERF, and eventually B747F, focusing on Erbil and Sulaimaniya. This led to the creation of a new mode of transportation to Iraq, shortening the trading cycle, and improving the supply chain by leaps and bounds.

In addition to his business activities, Majid is also actively involved in a number of philanthropic initiatives. He is a supporter of education and healthcare programs in the Kurdistan Region and Iraq.

Majid continues to be an inspiration to entrepreneurs and business leaders in the region. He is a living example of what can be achieved through hard work, dedication, and a vision for the future.

MATEEN Express & Logistics Iraq

- 14 branches, stations and airport offices across Iraq
- 7 branches in UAE, China & Turkey
- Grew to 25 branches and over 400 staff in less than a decade
- Fleet of 44 truck trailers and 74 Toyota 4x4s serving the oil and gas industry in Iraq
- Over 30 vans & pick-up for cargo & courier operations across Iraq

Air Transportation to Iraq

- Serving air transportation to Iraq during times when other carriers cannot/do not cooperate
- Carriage of Radioactive Sources, Explosives, Out of Gauge, and Heavy Loads
- GSA, GSSA & CSA partnership with all major cargo airlines to Iraq & Kurdistan
- The only operator offering "Guaranteed Next Day Deliveries to Iraq"

Dr. Raman Kumar

Managing Director, Al-Futtaim Logistics

Dr. Raman Kumar is the Managing Director of Al-Futtaim Logistics, one of the 3PL pioneers in the United Arab Emirates founded in 1980 with reach to 150 countries worldwide.

With more than 35 years of expertise in the logistics industry, Dr. Kumar transformed Al-Futtaim Logistics into a global powerhouse in the industry noted for its operational excellence, customer-centric values and bespoke innovative solutions.

Under Dr. Kumar's leadership, Al-Futtaim Logistics has achieved many milestones, including ASA-100, AEO, GDP, ISO certifications, expansion into international markets, enhanced value-added services, and rapid decision-making. He also introduced Yard Management System for automotive logistics, reducing operational costs and order turnaround time.

With a diverse team of 1031 associates, Dr. Kumar leads Al-Futtaim Logistics into achieving greater heights, including, pioneering technological innovations in AI driven transport management, introducing new services such as the mobility EV (electric vehicle) logistics, food security logistics, time critical aerospace and exhibition logistics, and steering geographical expansions of warehouse operations into Saudi Arabia and Oman.

Under Dr. Kumar's stewardship, Al-Futtaim Logistics became a voluntary member of Green Freight Asia, reducing its carbon footprint with biofuel-powered transportation and intelligent solutions for sustainable logistics.

Dr. Kumar hails from Chennai, India. He is a valued member of professional accounting bodies in the USA and Australia, contributing to the global accounting community. He is also a recipient of numerous awards in sustainability, innovation and excellence in logistics, apart from recognitions from various cause-oriented groups and communities.

Beyond the corporate realm, Dr. Kumar is deeply involved in community and environmental initiatives. He actively supports nationalization efforts, environmental and social causes, and mentors' university students.

Dr. Kumar holds MBA, CMA, and post-graduate degrees in finance and management. In 2021, he earned the prestigious Professional Doctoral Certificate in Global Leadership and Management from the European International University (E.I.U) in Paris, France.

Holger Ostheimer

Managing Director, DC Aviation Al-Futtaim LLC

Holger Ostheimer is the Managing Director of DC Aviation Al-Futtaim (DCAF), a joint venture between Germany's DC Aviation Group and Dubai-based Al-Futtaim. With over 25 years in the aviation industry, he has extensive experience in airline operations, aircraft brokerage, and flight support. He also holds a commercial aircraft pilot license, obtained in 2001.

Ostheimer's career includes roles with Chapman Freeborn in Germany and the UK, focusing on charter and operations. Between 2005 and 2009, he was part of the management team at DaimlerChrysler Aviation, which later became DC Aviation. He has also provided aviation management consultation for various start-up and reorganization projects, including the joint venture between Al-Futtaim and DC Aviation.

In 2012, Ostheimer took on the role of Managing Director at DCAF in Dubai. During the company's development, he assembled a team to provide technical expertise for building the hangar facility, establishing operational, administrative, and commercial structures, and obtaining a UAE Aircraft Operator Certificate and a CAR 145 maintenance organization.

Under his leadership, DCAF has achieved significant milestones, including the expansion of its managed aircraft fleet and the celebration of its 10th anniversary.

Ostheimer is a graduate of Johann Wolfgang Goethe University in Frankfurt, Germany, where he studied Sports Science, Biology, and Education. He is known for his emphasis on premium quality operations and his understanding of people relations.

Kinjarapu Ram Mohan Naidu

Union Minister of Civil Aviation

Kinjarapu Ram Mohan Naidu, appointed as India's Union Minister of Civil Aviation in mid-2024, has swiftly initiated efforts to enhance the nation's aviation sector. A prominent figure in Indian politics, he is recognized as the youngest minister in Prime Minister Narendra Modi's cabinet.

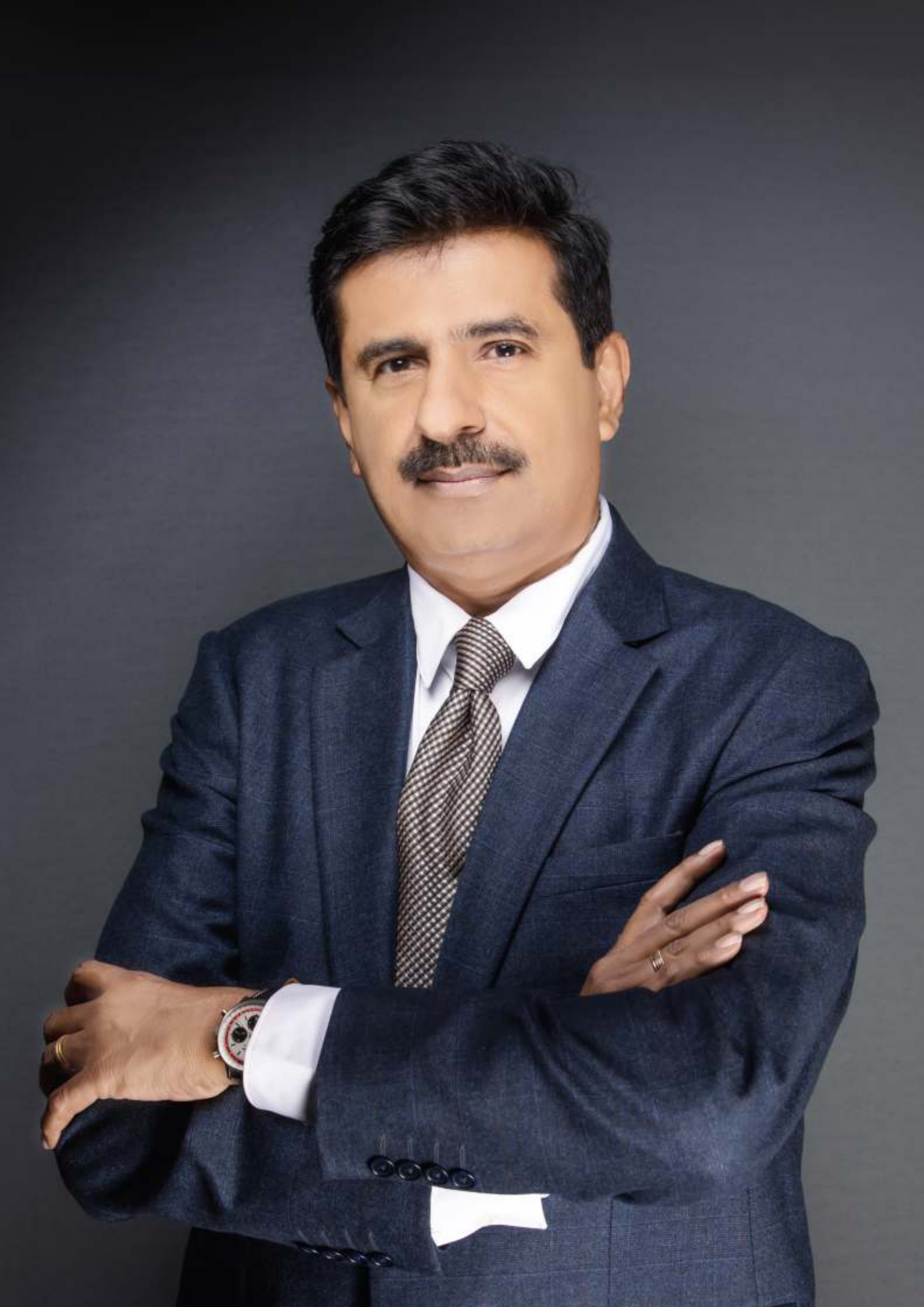
Minister Naidu has prioritized making air travel more accessible and affordable for all citizens. His strategic focus includes reducing airfare prices and improving aviation infrastructure to accommodate the increasing demand for air travel across the country.

As the Civil Aviation Minister, Mr. Naidu aims to enhance airport infrastructure to meet global standards, promote sustainable aviation practices to reduce the industry's environmental impact, and strengthen India's position as a global aviation hub through innovation and investment.

The Union Minister also emphasized on the importance of use of technology in enhancing passenger experience, and plan to leverage artificial intelligence and social media to address passenger concerns effectively.

Minister Naidu has actively encouraged the nation's youth to pursue careers in aviation. His participation in events like the International Civil Aviation Day underscores his commitment to inspiring the next generation of aviation professionals.

Minister Naidu's dynamic approach and forward-thinking initiatives are poised to drive India's civil aviation sector toward greater efficiency, accessibility, and technological advancement.



Jaideep Mirchandani

Chairman, Sky One FZE

Jaideep Mirchandani, the founder and Group Chairman of Sky One FZE, is a dynamic entrepreneur whose visionary leadership has shaped the aviation industry of the region. With an innate understanding of emerging industry trends and a relentless drive for transformative impact, Mr. Mirchandani has led Sky One FZE on an incredible journey from its humble beginnings to a global aviation powerhouse.

A Visionary Entrepreneur:

Jaideep Mirchandani's journey in the aviation world is a testament to his entrepreneurial spirit. He possesses a deep understanding of the aviation landscape and has a unique ability to foresee trends and their potential for transformative change. Under his guidance, Sky One FZE has evolved from a cargo startup into a diversified and robust aviation conglomerate. His leadership has seen the company expanding its footprint across various markets, operating multiple subsidiaries, and managing a fleet of over 60 airplanes and helicopters, each with its unique modifications.

Innovative Thinking and Ambition:

Mr. Mirchandani is celebrated for his innovative thinking and the remarkable ability to identify opportunities before they become mainstream. His vision for Sky One FZE extends beyond the conventional boundaries of the aviation industry. He continuously seeks new avenues for growth and development, positioning the company as a forward-thinking and adaptable player in the global aviation market.

A Broad Spectrum of Aviation:

Jaideep Mirchandani's impact on the aviation industry is undeniable. He initiated his aviation journey by providing cargo support in Russia, quickly establishing a strong foothold in various aviation sectors. His actions across the spectrum of aviation, from leasing to training and relief initiatives, have propelled Sky One FZE into a globally successful aviation business venture.

Global Partnerships and Leading the Private Sector:

Under his leadership, Sky One FZE has founded and partnered with several leading passenger and global cargo airlines with operations in Europe, India, China and the Middle East. This has made the conglomerate one of the leading privately-owned aviation entities in the world.

Innovation and Problem-Solving:

Mr. Mirchandani is known for his calculated risk-taking and his knack for identifying and nurturing talent. He has assembled a team of industry experts and visionary thinkers who share his passion for pushing boundaries and driving innovation. Within the organization, he fosters a culture of adaptability and agility. He is renowned for seeking solutions to problems that may appear insurmountable to most, pushing the boundaries of what's possible in the aviation industry.

A Humanitarian Vision:

Sky One FZE, under Mr. Mirchandani's leadership operates a fleet of helicopters that provide cargo, passenger ferry as well as humanitarian relief and fire-fighting capabilities in Thailand, Turkey and India. Originally conceptualized to launch urgent charters for disaster management, this capability has become a vital component in responding to global crises such as the fight against Covid-19 especially in India.

Leveraging Engineering and Global Trends to Shape the Future:

Jaideep Mirchandani's forward-thinking approach doesn't stop at mere business expansion. He envisions the future of aviation and is actively using engineering and current trends to anticipate changes in the industry. Sky One FZE's commitment to pilot training, engineering, and MRO services reflects this vision. The company invests in state-of-the-art training programs, ensuring that the next generation of aviators is equipped with the skills needed for the evolving aviation landscape. Moreover, the comprehensive maintenance and repair services provided by Sky One FZE ensure that aircraft are not just maintained but are continually adapted to meet the demands of the future.

Jaideep Mirchandani's remarkable journey is marked by vision, innovation, and the relentless pursuit of excellence. As the founder and Group Chairman of Sky One FZE, he continues to shape the aviation industry, pioneering new horizons and setting an inspiring example for the world of aviation and entrepreneurship.

Adrien Thominet

Executive Chairman, ECS Group

Adrien Thominet started his career in New York as Commercial Director at FICOFI, a luxury brand promoting Bordeaux 'grands crus' fine wines globally. Adrien then worked for UniFrance Film in Tokyo where he managed the Yokohama Film Festival.

In 1995, Adrien joined ECS Group as Commercial Manager of the company's Aero Cargo business unit, where he subsequently became Managing Director. In 2009, Adrien accepted the challenge of leading the commercial development of the Group, before his appointment in 2011 as Chief Operating Officer.

In 2017, ECS Group nominated Adrien as Chief Executive Officer to fully align with the transformative needs of their partners and clients and support them to navigate the shift to compete in the digital economy. Adrien has helped the group to develop its service offering, in particular its Total Cargo Management offering. His drive to invest in digital technology and make the group a leader in this area has also helped to make this service offering possible thanks to cutting-edge tools that maximize performance.

In 2021, in the midst of a pandemic, Adrien became Executive Chairman of the Group. With his long experience and knowledge of the aviation industry, he enabled the Group to get through the crisis by implementing a new strategy: the "Augmented GSA", which takes into account digitalization and the challenge of sustainability. In 2022, ECS Group has seen the realization of its plan to evolve the traditional GSSA model with the development and strong adoption of the abilities.

The concept of the 'Augmented GSSA,' a hybrid model that leverages best-in-class tech tools, offers a suite of à la carte services, but also enabling ECS Group to deliver the best Total Cargo Management (TCM) solutions. This innovative approach has redefined the traditional GSSA model, integrating digital solutions to maximize flexibility and performance for ECS Group's partners.

In 2024, Adrien further strengthens ECS Group's commitment to technology through deepening partnerships with CargoTech members, ensuring that ECS remains at the forefront of innovation and service excellence. He, thus, ushers ECS Group into a new era, continuing to lead with a visionary approach that sets new standards for the industry.

Ahsan Ali Mangi

Federal Secretary
Pakistan Ministry of Aviation

An accomplished bureaucrat, Mr. Ahsan Ali Mangi serves as the Federal Secretary of the Ministry of Aviation, Pakistan, bringing a wealth of experience from his distinguished career in public administration and international cooperation.

Renowned for his dedication and strategic leadership, Mangi has played pivotal roles in shaping policies and driving initiatives that foster development and innovation.

Prior to his current appointment, Mangi served as the Additional Secretary at the Commerce Division, where he contributed to enhancing Pakistan's trade policies and economic partnerships. His expertise in international relations was further showcased during his tenure as Deputy Secretary General of the Economic Cooperation Organization (ECO), where he worked on regional collaboration and economic integration among member states.

At the Prime Minister's Office, Mangi held the position of Joint Secretary, where he was instrumental in coordinating policy frameworks and managing high-level government initiatives. He also served as a Member of Environment at the Capital Development Authority, emphasizing sustainable urban development, and as Director General Operations at the Benazir Income Support Program, contributing to social welfare and poverty alleviation programs.

Mangi's extensive background in governance, environment, and social development positions him as a visionary leader in Pakistan's aviation sector. Under his stewardship, Pakistan's Ministry of Aviation is expected to strengthen its regulatory framework, enhance infrastructure, and align Pakistan's aviation standards with global benchmarks, fostering growth and modernization in the industry.

Paul Griffiths

CEO, Dubai Airports

Paul Griffiths is the CEO of Dubai Airports, with the responsibility for the operation and development of the world's busiest airport for international passengers—DXB, as well as Dubai's future hub in the making, Dubai World Central – Al Maktoum International Airport (DWC).

Paul joined Dubai Airports as its first CEO in October 2007. A year later, on 14 October, Paul played an instrumental role in the flawless launch of Terminal 3 at DXB and on 27 June 2010 successfully opened Dubai's second airport, DWC.

He achieved another milestone in Dubai's aviation history on 2 January 2013 with the opening of Concourse A, the world's first purpose-built A380 facility, and again with Concourse D on February 24, 2016.

He also oversaw the opening of the passenger terminal at DWC on 27 October 2013. On December 20, 2018, Paul joined Dubai Airports' Chairman HH Sheikh Ahmed bin Saeed Al Maktoum in welcoming DXB's billionth guest.

Under Paul's leadership, Dubai Airports successfully managed the COVID-19 crisis – acknowledged by the world's aviation and airline industry as a challenge unprecedented in history, and DXB became one of the first airports to welcome back international tourists.

He led the teams at DXB and DWC to support a massive repatriation operation in close coordination with diplomatic missions, UAE authorities, airlines, and other service partners to help nearly half a million people get back to their homes during the first global lockdown in 2020.

Paul played a crucial role in the recovery of DXB's operations and growth through travel corridor arrangements with several key markets as well as by lobbying the industry to push for standardized testing-based travel protocols.

Paul spearheaded a campaign to keep the hibernating parts of the airport ready for reopening at very short notice. This resulted in the timely and smooth reopening of Terminal 1 and Concourse D in June 2021 and the airport's return to 100 per cent operational capacity with the reopening of Concourse A in November 2021.

Before moving to Dubai, Paul was Managing Director of London's Gatwick Airport. Before joining airport operator BAA in 2004, he spent 14 years with the Virgin Group, working closely with Sir Richard Branson as a Board Director of the Virgin Travel Group, responsible for the commercial activities of both Virgin Atlantic Airways and Virgin Trains.

Sir Tim Clark

President, Emirates Airline

Sir Tim Clark is the President of Emirates Airline, a position he has held since 2003.

Under his leadership, he has driven Emirates' rapid growth into the world's largest international airline serving 130 cities on six continents via its hub in Dubai. He has also steered the airline through multiple ups and downs in the aviation industry, including a remarkable recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic into record profitability.

Mr. Clark has been in the civil aviation business for his whole professional career, having joined the British Caledonian in 1972, before moving to Gulf Air in 1975, and subsequently, to Dubai in 1985 where he became a member of the founding team of Emirates as Head of Airline Planning.

Mr. Clark has been awarded numerous honors, including CAPA Airline Executive of the Year in 2022 for his individual influence on the aviation industry, strategic thinking, and innovative direction for the growth of Emirates and the industry. In 2023, Future Travel Experience presented Mr. Clark with its first-ever FTE Visionary Award in recognition of his influence in shaping the industry. Air Transport World also presented Mr. Clark with the Lifetime Achievement Award.

Antonoaldo Neves

Group CEO, Etihad Aviation Group

Antonoaldo Neves was appointed in October 2022 as the Group Chief Executive Officer of Etihad Aviation Group, a diversified global aviation company which includes the national airline of the United Arab Emirates, Etihad Airways, and Etihad Cargo, one of the leading air cargo carriers in the world.

Neves was previously CEO and Board Member of TAP, the national airline of Portugal, where he was responsible for leading a major turnaround that contributed significantly to the development of tourism in Portugal.

Prior, he served as President of Azul Airlines in Brazil, which he led to a successful Initial Public Offering (IPO) on the New York Stock Exchange. He was also a partner at McKinsey & Company, where he developed the long-term plan for the aviation sector in Brazil.

Beginning his career as a civil engineer, Neves holds a Master of Business Administration degree from the University of Virginia's Darden School of Business and a Master's Degree in Corporate Finance from the IAG Business School at PUC-Rio.

Prof. Ahmet Bolat

Chairman of the Board of Directors and the Executive Committee Turkish Airlines

Born in Konya in 1959, Prof. Ahmet Bolat graduated from Istanbul Technical University in 1981 as an Industrial Engineer. In 1984, he graduated from M.Sc. Operations Research program at Stanford University and in 1988, he obtained his Ph.D. in Industrial and Operations Engineering from the University of Michigan.

Prof. Bolat started his career in 1981 as a Design and Production Engineer at Yıldız Kalıp Şirketi. Between 1985 and 1988, he held a various of roles at the University of Michigan including as teaching assistant and research assistant. From 1988 to 2005, he worked as assistant professor, associate professor and professor at Industrial Engineering Department of King Saud University, Riyadh.

He was assigned as Senior Vice President of Investment Management at Turkish Airlines Inc. in 2005 and served as Chief Investment and Technology Officer between 2012 and 2022. During his tenure, he managed strategic growth plan of Turkish Airlines and led the team involved in the supply of necessary aircraft to the Turkish Airlines fleet.

Being also responsible for international relations and alliances, Prof. Bolat has managed government affairs issues and commercial agreements with airline partners, ensuring partnership and network development with enhanced bilateral relations. He also led the feasibility study of alliance selection project for Turkish Airlines.

In 2022, Prof. Ahmet Bolat was appointed as the Chairman of the Board and the Executive Committee of Turkish Airlines, the national carrier of Türkiye.

Established in 1933 with a fleet of just five aircraft, Star Alliance member Turkish Airlines now has a fleet of 474 (passenger and cargo) aircraft flying to 352 worldwide destinations, including 299 international and 53 domestics in 131 countries.

Dr. Brendan Nelson AO

Senior Vice President, The Boeing Company
President, Boeing Global

Dr. Brendan Nelson AO was appointed Senior Vice President of The Boeing Company and President of Boeing Global effective Jan. 12, 2023. He is a member of the company's Executive Council.

Nelson is responsible for the company's global strategy and corporate operations outside the United States, overseeing 20 regional offices in key global markets. His responsibilities include developing the company's growth and productivity initiatives outside the U.S., forming new business and industrial partnerships, overseeing international affairs, enhancing Boeing's local presence and providing global functional support.

Nelson joined Boeing in February 2020 and was president of Boeing Australia, New Zealand and South Pacific. He was the senior company leader in the Oceania region as well as chairman of the board for Boeing Australia Holdings. In this role, Nelson coordinated all Boeing activities, led government relations and directed the implementation of Boeing's strategy to expand its local presence and grow the business. He con-currently served as chairman of the American Chamber of Commerce (AmCham) Australia and chairman of the council of the Australian War Memorial.

Prior to joining Boeing, Nelson served as director of the Australian War Memorial for seven years, prior to which he was the Australian Ambassador to Belgium, Luxembourg, the European Union and NATO from 2010 to 2012.

From 1996 until 2009, he was a member of the Australian parliament, serving also as Minister for Education, Science and Training (2001-2006), following which he was appointed Australian Minister for Defence in 2006 when troops were deployed to Iraq, Afghanistan, East Timor and the Solomon Islands. He also oversaw major Defence acquisitions, including ships, helicopters and fighter jets. He was elected leader of the Liberal Party of Australia and federal Opposition from 2007 until 2008.

A physician by training, earlier in his career Nelson was elected National President of the Australian Medical Association (AMA), becoming the youngest person ever to hold this position and was awarded the AMA's highest honour, the Gold Medal for "Distinguished Service to Medicine and Humanity" in 1995.

In recognition of his commitment to public health, he was awarded an Honorary Fellowship of the Royal Australasian College of Physicians. Nelson was also appointed an Officer of the Order of Australia (AO) in January 2016 for his services to the community, the parliament of Australia, diplomacy and cultural leadership.

Nelson has a Bachelor of Medicine and Surgery from Flinders University, South Australia. He is the recipient of three honorary doctorates from the Flinders University of South Australia (2011); the Australian National University (2017) and the University of South Australia (2019).

He is a Fellow of the Royal Society of New South Wales (2017); honorary life member of the Returned and Services League of Australia (2018); honorary Fellow of the Australian College of Nursing (2021); Rotary Paul Harris Fellow (2001) and Fellow of the Australian War Memorial (2021). He is also an honorary citizen of the Belgian city of Ieper/Ypres (2018) and was appointed Commander of the Order of the Crown, Belgium (2021) for his service to the Belgian people.

Guillaume Faury

CEO, Airbus
President and Chairman, European Aerospace Board (Security and Defense Industries)
Chairman, GIFAS Board (French Aerospace Industry)

Guillaume Faury was appointed Airbus Chief Executive Officer (CEO) in April 2019 and re-appointed in 2022. Guillaume leads the Company's Executive Committee. He was previously President of Airbus' commercial aircraft business, a role he had held since February 2018.

Additionally, Guillaume is a member of the board of directors of AXA SA (since April 2021) and is the President of the Groupement des Industries Françaises de l'Aéronautique et du Spatial (GIFAS), the French aerospace industries association (since July 2021). He was appointed President of the Aerospace, Security and Defence Industries Association of Europe (ASD) in June 2023.

Prior to this, Guillaume was Chief Executive Officer of Airbus Helicopters (2013-2018), where his achievements included restructuring its manufacturing system and introducing new technologies.

Before that, he enjoyed a four-year spell in the car industry at Peugeot (2009-2013), the French automotive manufacturer, rising to become the Executive Vice President for Research and Development and a member of the company's management board. He presided over significant advances in Peugeot's lower-emissions hybrid-engine technology and the overhaul of the company's product range, among other accomplishments.

Between 1998 and 2008, he held various leadership positions in engineering, programs and flight testing in Airbus' helicopter business, which at the time operated under the name of Eurocopter. He became Executive Vice President for Programs and a member of the Eurocopter Executive Committee, before being appointed as Executive Director for Research and Development.

Guillaume began his career in 1992 as a flight-test engineer for the Eurocopter Tiger helicopter in the Direction Générale de l'Armement (DGA), the French government agency responsible for the development and purchase of defence systems for the French armed forces.

He graduated from the École polytechnique in Paris in 1990 and, subsequently, from the École nationale supérieure de l'aéronautique et de l'espace in Toulouse.

Guillaume's love of flying and aviation dates back to his childhood. He is a qualified light-aircraft pilot and helicopter flight-test engineer with 1,300 hours of flying experience. He was born in 1968 in Cherbourg, Normandy. He is married with three children.

Juergen Strommer

Chief Executive Officer, Dabico Group

Juergen Strommer is the CEO of the Dabico Group, a US Corporation recently acquired by the Fernweh Group.

Strommer joined the Cavotec Group in 2007 and since then held various positions including COO for EMEA. There he also drove the Airports development in the Group with several major achievements for the company, the most noteworthy of which is Cavotec's milestone EUR 30 million turnkey projects for the Bahrain Airport Company, one of the largest orders in the Group's history.

Within the vibrant ports and maritime sector, Strommer has also helped to develop the market for the automated mooring system, Moormaster, with landmark projects in the Middle East.

Prior to joining Cavotec, Strommer was the Director of Sales and Marketing ME for ThyssenKrupp, a major German Industrial, and worked with the Al Futtaim Group as General Manager.

Born in Stuttgart, Germany in 1970, Juergen has a Bachelor's degree in mechanical engineering from MES Kirchheim and a Master's degree in Business Management from GARP Stuttgart.

Syed Mohamed Wazeer
Managing Director, Prime Aviation

Syed Wazeer, Managing Director of Prime Aviation, had his MBA in Aviation Management from Coventry University in the UK and Airline Management Integration from IATA.

He formed the company in 2019 which benefits from his decades of rich experience in the industry. It began as a charter scheduling broker and has now evolved into an airline with its own fleet of planes. The pandemic ushered an opportunity for Prime Aviation to grow more amid increased demand for air cargo services, pushing it to an unprecedented trajectory of growth, expansion and profitability.

Wazeer's priorities are to focus on their core strengths of cargo consolidation and scheduled operations while expanding their feet and network of coverage. Having worked in war zones and experienced in liaising with government entities to ensure uninterrupted flow of goods despite impediments, Wazeer believes Prime Aviation can accomplish this. With trust and integrity built with its clients over time, the company is confident in sustaining its business.

Investing on technologies, Wazeer envisions to provide transportation solutions to areas that are hard to reach across the region, thereby, empowering its people with supplies and possibilities.

Natarajan Chandrasekaran, affectionately called "Chandra," is a celebrated Indian business leader, recognized for his exceptional contributions to global business and technology. As the Chairman of Air India and Tata Sons, he plays a pivotal role in shaping the trajectory of the aviation sector in India and beyond.

As Chairman of Air India, Mr. Chandrasekaran has been instrumental in revitalizing India's national carrier after its acquisition by the Tata Group in 2022. His vision and leadership have driven a strategic transformation of the airline, focusing on operational efficiency, customer satisfaction, and global competitiveness.

Under his guidance, Air India announced a record-breaking aircraft order in 2023, including Boeing and Airbus aircraft, to expand its fleet and improve operational efficiency. This modernization strategy aligns with global sustainability goals by adopting more fuel-efficient aircraft.

Mr. Chandrasekaran has focused on expanding Air India's international footprint by reactivating long-haul routes and establishing partnerships with global airlines.

Mr. Chandrasekaran's contributions extend beyond Air India, influencing the broader Indian aviation landscape. His vision of integrating technology with traditional operations has inspired innovation and efficiency across the sector.

Natarajan Chandrasekaran
Chairman, Air India

Muhammad Ejaz Haider
Founder & CEO Soaring High

Muhammad Ejaz Haider is the founder and CEO of Soaring High, Inc., which he established in 2004. He has over 35 years of rich experience in the aviation industry, working as an Aerospace Engineer and MRO Services Specialist, Throughout the years, he traveled around the world and acquainted himself through different facets in the aerospace industry; from maintenance levels to modifications & upgrades. His passion for aviation only widened when he formed Soaring High, to provide top of the line customer services in the Middle East and Asia Regions.

This multinational company has become a one stop distributor and representative of specialized aviation, which provides high performance hardware and equipment for aerospace, airline, electronics and engineering industries in the Gulf regions, Asia and Europe. The company has collaborated with renowned OEMs, Stocking Distributors and authorized OEM repair centers to market a diverse and wide range of products and MRO services in the region.

Soaring High is known for its dedication to providing high-quality aviation parts, ensuring quick delivery and actively resolving customer issues. This approach has earned the company a strong reputation worldwide as a leading distributor of the aviation industry.

Sanjeev S. Gadhia is the Founder and CEO of Astral Aviation Ltd., a dedicated all-cargo airline based in Nairobi, Kenya which operates a fleet of 14 freighters into Europe, the Middle East and within Africa.

Operating one of the most successful airlines in Africa for 21 years, Sanjeev is responsible for the overall management, network planning and fleet acquisition for Astral Aviation.

Sanjeev is rated as a “New Generation Leader for Africa” by the prestigious African Leadership Network, while Astral has been rated as the best all-cargo carrier in Africa in 2011, 2013, 2015, 2017 and 2019.

In 2020, Sanjeev was appointed Chairman of AFRAA's (African Airlines Association) Cargo & Route Network Committee based on his extensive experience in the air-cargo sector in Africa.

In 2017, Sanjeev became the first Director from Africa to sit on TIACA (The International Air Cargo Association) and is currently Vice Chairman of TIACA.

A banker by profession, Sanjeev has a Master's Degree in Business Administration from the Schiller International University in London, in addition to being a member of EO Kenya (Entrepreneurs Organization) and YPO (Young Professional's Organization) Africa Great Lakes.

Sanjeev Gadhia
CEO, Astral Aviation Ltd.

S. Somanath
Chairman, Indian Space Research Organization

Mr. S. Somanath took charge as Secretary, Department of Space, and Chairman, Space Commission on January 14, 2022. Under his leadership, India's Chandrayaan-3 mission achieved a historic success with the Vikram lander making a soft landing on the Moon's surface on August 23, 2023.

Previously, Somanath served as Director of the Vikram Sarabhai Space Centre (VSSC), leading Launch Vehicle Technology Development, and as Director of the Liquid Propulsion Systems Centre (LPSC). He was also the Project Director of the GSLV Mk-III, overseeing the successful first experimental flight of LVM3-X/CARE in December 2014.

A key figure in the development of PSLV and GSLV Mk-III, Somanath has expertise in launch vehicle system engineering, including propulsion, structural dynamics, and vehicle integration. His early career at VSSC began in 1985, and he contributed to numerous satellite launches, including the first commercial mini-satellite deployments. Somanath holds a B.Tech in Mechanical Engineering and a Master's in Aerospace Engineering.

Pieter Elbers
Chief Executive Officer, Indigo

Pieter Elbers is a distinguished figure in the aviation industry, boasting over three decades of experience. He currently serves as the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of IndiGo, India's largest airline by market share, a position he has held since September 2022.making a soft landing on the Moon's surface on August 23, 2023.

He began his aviation career with KLM Royal Dutch Airlines in 1992 as a Manager of Aircraft Loading. Over the years, he ascended through various managerial roles, including positions in Japan, Greece, and Italy, before returning to the Netherlands. In 2011, he was appointed Chief Operating Officer, and by 2014, he became the President and CEO of KLM. During his tenure as CEO of KLM from 2014 to 2022, Elbers played a pivotal role in steering the airline through significant challenges and transformations.

Since joining IndiGo, Elbers has been instrumental in guiding the airline towards new heights, focusing on expanding its international footprint and enhancing operational efficiency.

Elbers' contributions to the aviation sector have been widely recognized. In June 2024, he was appointed as the Chair of the International Air Transport Association (IATA) Board of Governors, reflecting his esteemed position within the global aviation community.

Furthermore, in 2024, he was honored with the 'Executive Leadership: Asia Pacific Award' at the Airline Strategy Awards, underscoring his impactful leadership in the region.

Under Elbers' stewardship, IndiGo is poised to embark on a journey of expansion and internationalization, aiming to connect more destinations and offer enhanced services to its passengers. His strategic vision emphasizes operational excellence, customer satisfaction, and sustainable growth, positioning IndiGo as a formidable player in the global aviation landscape.

Muhammad Sami
President & CEO, Skyplan Services

Muhammad Sami has dedicated more than three decades to the aviation industry, shaping it with his leadership, vision, and unwavering commitment to excellence. As the President and CEO of Skyplan Services Ltd., he has played a vital role in transforming the company from its roots in Alberta, Canada, into a globally respected name in flight operations management.

Thanks to Sami's forward-thinking approach, Skyplan has grown its presence far beyond North America, establishing strong footholds in the Middle East, Asia, and Africa. Under his guidance, the company has continually expanded its services, providing essential support like Operations Control Center (OCC) solutions for airlines. His deep knowledge of the industry, combined with a relentless passion for customer-focused services, has been the driving force behind Skyplan's success.

One of his proudest achievements is launching the Skyplan Aviation Academy in Dubai in 2022. This groundbreaking institute is the only one in the region specializing in flight operations and dispatch training. Recognized by the UAE General Civil Aviation Authority (GCAA) and meeting the high standards of the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO), the academy reflects Sami's dedication to nurturing the next generation of aviation professionals.

Sami's leadership is defined by his ability to adapt, innovate, and inspire. His vision has ensured that Skyplan remains a trusted partner in the aviation sector, offering cutting-edge solutions and fostering meaningful global collaborations. For Muhammad Sami, it's not just about growing a business—it's about advancing the aviation industry as a whole.

Salil Gupte is the President of Boeing India, where he leads the company's operations, strategies, and partnerships across India.

He is responsible for leading and integrating the company's work in India across its three business units: Boeing Commercial Airplanes, Boeing Global Services, and Boeing Defense, Space & Security.

Salil leads a team of over 3,000 India employees who work on building the future of aerospace and defence, supporting both Indian and global customers and advancing the next generation of aerospace technologies at the company's sites in Bengaluru, Chennai, Hyderabad, Mumbai, and New Delhi.

Previously, Gupte was vice president of Boeing Capital Corporation, a wholly owned Boeing subsidiary, responsible for arranging, structuring and providing financing for Boeing's commercial airplane, space and defense products. Gupte's earlier roles at Boeing include supply chain execution for Boeing Global Services, and leading commercial operations for Boeing's spare parts business.

Salil Gupte
President, Boeing India

Vinay Dube
Founder & CEO, Akasa Air

Vinay Dube is a visionary leader and an influential figure in the aviation industry, best known for his role as the Founder and CEO of Akasa Air, India's innovative and rapidly growing low-cost airline. With over two decades of experience in the aviation and travel sectors, Dube has been instrumental in shaping Akasa Air's strategic direction, focusing on creating a customer-centric airline that thrives on sustainability and affordability.

Vinay Dube founded Akasa Air with the mission to bring affordable, reliable, and sustainable air travel to the Indian market. Under his leadership, Akasa Air has quickly gained recognition for its innovative business model and unique approach to air travel. Akasa Air focuses on providing a modern fleet, great service, and a value-driven flying experience that caters to a wide range of passengers across India.

Under Dube's leadership, Akasa Air has implemented a strong growth strategy, expanding its fleet with the latest generation Boeing 737 MAX aircraft. The airline aims to disrupt the Indian aviation market by prioritizing passenger experience, affordability, and sustainability. Akasa Air's innovative approach is designed to offer customers a new level of comfort, while also being environmentally conscious by focusing on fuel-efficient aircraft.

He has held leadership roles with American Airlines, Sabre Inc., Delta Airlines, Jet Airways and GoAir.

Remi Maillard is the President of Airbus India and Managing Director of South Asia region. He is responsible for commercial aircraft sales and business development, managing Airbus' regional footprint, which includes engineering, innovation, customer support and services as well as training. He has been instrumental in strengthening Airbus's presence in India.

With a career spanning several decades in the aerospace sector, Maillard brings a wealth of experience and strategic insight to his role, overseeing the operations, development, and growth of Airbus in the Indian subcontinent.

Remi Maillard has been pivotal in the company's efforts to build strong relationships with Indian airlines and the government. His leadership has helped Airbus secure major aircraft orders and expand its service offerings to Indian carriers.

Maillard has been a driving force behind the promotion of sustainable aviation in India. He has advocated for reducing the carbon footprint of the aviation industry, supporting Airbus' efforts to develop more fuel-efficient aircraft and exploring solutions to reduce emissions. His commitment to green aviation aligns with Airbus' global sustainability goals.

Remi Maillard
President & Managing Director
Airbus India

Siva Anand
Director, Global System Solutions, Dabico

Siva Anand has been instrumental in the development of the Aviation Business Unit for Dabico.

He has over two decades of experience in the field of aviation infrastructures and the manufacturing of Ground Support Equipments.

He has successfully secured and executed multiple turnkey projects in all major Airports from Middle East and India.

His achievements resulted in delivering sustainable designs, operationally efficient solutions and quantifiable cost savings to clients.

With an extensive experience in the global aviation market, Siva has been responsible for the development of state of art Integrated Aircraft Stand System that ensures efficient operation and helps the Airport operator to increase revenue.

Siva has been promoted recently as "Director of Global System Solutions and PCA Product Management". He is responsible for the strategies and implementation of the turnkey system solutions and PCA product development for Dabico Airports Solutions globally.

Gautam Adani is a visionary entrepreneur, industrialist, and philanthropist who serves as the Chairman of Adani Enterprises Limited, the flagship entity of the Adani Group.

Under his leadership, the Adani Enterprises Limited has emerged as a key player in India's aviation and airport sectors, contributing significantly to the nation's infrastructure development.

Gautam Adani has spearheaded the group's foray into airport operations and development, positioning it as one of India's largest airport operators.

Adani Enterprises successfully acquired operational control of six major airports in India through public-private partnerships. These include airports in Ahmedabad, Lucknow, Mangaluru, Jaipur, Guwahati, and Thiruvananthapuram. In 2021, the group acquired a majority stake in Mumbai International Airport Limited (MIAL), taking over operations of one of the busiest airports in India.

The group is actively developing Navi Mumbai International Airport, a state-of-the-art greenfield airport that will cater to the increasing air travel demand in India.

Although Adani Enterprises is not directly involved in running an airline, Gautam Adani has facilitated infrastructure that supports the airline industry's growth. Adani-led airport developments focus on modernizing terminals, enhancing passenger convenience, and integrating technology for seamless travel experiences. With a strategic emphasis on air cargo infrastructure, Adani-managed airports play a crucial role in supporting India's logistics and export ecosystem, including time-sensitive sectors like pharmaceuticals and e-commerce.

Gautam Adani
Chairman, Adani Enterprises Limited

Gautam Adani envisions transforming India's aviation infrastructure to match global standards. His efforts contribute to making India a global hub for air travel and logistics, driving economic growth and connectivity.

Campbell Wilson
Chief Executive Officer & Managing Director, Air India

Mr. Campbell Wilson serves as the Chief Executive Officer and Managing Director of Air India, leading the airline through a transformative phase, including its merger with Vistara, a Tata Group joint venture.A seasoned professional in the aviation industry, Dr. Jeffrey Goh, the CEO of Gulf Air Group Holding, brings with him a wealth of experience and expertise.

With 26 years of experience in the aviation industry spanning both full-service and low-cost airlines, Mr. Wilson previously held the position of CEO at Scoot, the low-cost subsidiary of Singapore Airlines (SIA).

Since assuming his role at Air India, the airline has undertaken significant initiatives, including placing record-breaking orders for 470 aircraft from Airbus and Boeing. This forms part of a comprehensive overhaul following the Tata Group's acquisition of the airline from government ownership.

Mr. Wilson began his career as a Management Trainee with SIA in New Zealand in 1996. He subsequently held roles in Canada, Hong Kong, and Japan before returning to Singapore in 2011 as the founding CEO of Scoot, leading the airline until 2016. He then served as SIA's Senior Vice President of Sales & Marketing, overseeing Pricing, Distribution, eCommerce, Merchandising, Brand & Marketing, Global Sales, and the airline's international offices. In April 2020, he resumed leadership of Scoot as CEO before taking on his current role at Air India.

Dr. Goh has a law degree from the University of Hull in England. He earned his Ph.D. in Aviation from the University of Sheffield, UK.

Ajay Singh
Chairman, SpiceJet

Ajay Singh is a distinguished entrepreneur and business leader, renowned for his transformative leadership in the aviation industry, particularly as the Chairman and Managing Director of SpiceJet, India's leading low-cost airline.

With his visionary approach and strategic acumen, Singh has played a pivotal role in shaping the Indian aviation landscape and positioning SpiceJet as a key player in the global aviation market.

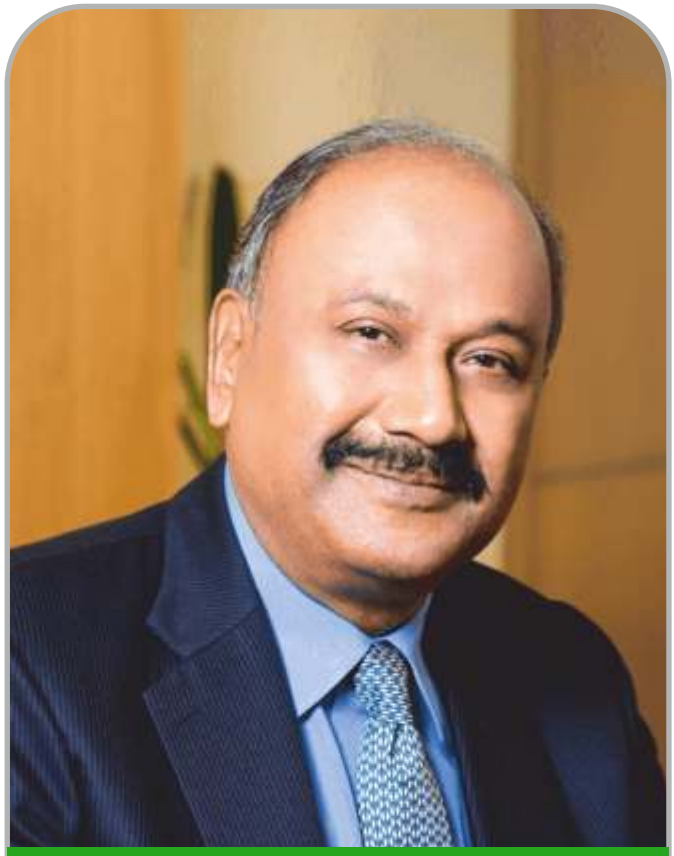
In 2005, Ajay Singh, along with Bhupendra Kansagra, acquired and renamed grounded ModiLuft Airlines to SpiceJet. Reportedly, SpiceJet sold 38,000 tickets on its first day of operation and had a load factor of over 90%.

Ajay Singh is best known for orchestrating the remarkable turnaround of SpiceJet. In 2015, when the airline was on the brink of collapse due to financial distress, Singh reacquired a controlling stake in the company and implemented a comprehensive restructuring plan. Under his leadership, the airline regained stability, achieved profitability, and earned recognition for its operational efficiency and customer-centric approach.

Singh has been instrumental in expanding SpiceJet's operations both domestically and internationally. He introduced a fleet modernization program, enhancing efficiency and sustainability. Singh also prioritized regional connectivity in India, aligning with the government's UDAN (Ude Desh ka Aam Nagrik) initiative, which aims to make air travel accessible to underserved regions.

Ajay Singh has championed the adoption of innovative technologies in aviation. SpiceJet became the first Indian airline to introduce a dedicated freighter fleet and has significantly contributed to the growth of air cargo in the region. This initiative proved vital during the COVID-19 pandemic, when the airline facilitated the transportation of essential goods, including vaccines and medical supplies.

Ajay Singh's contributions to the aviation industry have been widely recognized. He has received several accolades for his leadership, including the prestigious CAPA Chairman's Order of Merit for excellence and innovation in aviation. He is also an influential voice in industry forums, advocating policies that promote sustainable growth in the sector.



G.M. Rao
Chairman, GMR Group

G.M. Rao is a visionary leader and the Chairman of the GMR Group, a prominent infrastructure conglomerate in India. Under his leadership, GMR Group has established itself as a trailblazer in various sectors, particularly in the aviation, airports, and energy industries. His relentless pursuit of excellence and innovative strategies has been a key driving force behind GMR Group's remarkable success, especially in the development and operation of airports.

G.M. Rao is most renowned for his transformative role in revolutionizing India's airport infrastructure. Under his leadership, GMR Group developed the first public-private partnership (PPP) in Indian aviation with the successful modernization and expansion of Indira Gandhi International Airport (IGIA) in Delhi. This airport has won several awards for its world-class facilities and efficient operations and is considered a flagship project of GMR Group's aviation arm.

GMR Group also developed and operates Rajiv Gandhi International Airport in Hyderabad, a landmark project that has consistently earned accolades for its operational excellence and passenger-centric design. G.M. Rao's visionary approach to airport infrastructure has set a benchmark for the aviation industry.

G.M. Rao has been a driving force behind the success of several airport projects in India, leveraging the PPP model to bring private investment and expertise into public infrastructure. His efforts have significantly contributed to the modernization of airports in India, improving connectivity, efficiency, and passenger experience.

Under his leadership, GMR Group has expanded its airport operations to international markets. The group has been involved in the development, operation, and management of airports in countries such as Maldives, Istanbul, and Greece, further extending its influence in the global aviation industry.

Adel Abdullah Ali
Group CEO, Air Arabia

Adel Abdullah Ali is well known for being at the forefront of the development of modern aviation. His innovative achievements and contribution to air transport and tourism sector in the wider Arab world are globally recognized. He managed to transform Arab aviation in October 2003 when he set up Air Arabia, the Middle East and North Africa's first low-cost carrier (LCC), opening up a market niche in the region whose existence few had suspected.

The pioneering aviator drove Air Arabia's growth in the next eight years into the largest low-cost carrier in the MENA region, as well as the first publicly owned airline in the Arab World and it's largest by market value. Drawing on his 28 years of experience with industry leaders such as Gulf Air and British Airways, Adel has also been able to guide Air Arabia to become amongst the world's best run low-cost carriers, delivering a profit for eight years in succession.

Under the leadership of Adel, Air Arabia's business model has gone from strength to strength, enabling it to expand operations, enter new ventures and diversify into new revenue streams. Today, the Group holds a portfolio of successful businesses and projects, offering travel, tourism and hospitality services across the globe.

In addition to being the Group Chief Executive Officer of Air Arabia, Adel is also the chairman of Sharjah Information Systems Associates, Alpha Sharjah catering, Alpha Aviation Academy and Cozmo Travel. A board member of Sharjah Aviation Services; Adel also sits on the board of Air Arabia (Maroc), based in Casablanca's Mohamed V International Airport and Air Arabia (Egypt), based in Alexandria's Burj Al Arab International Airport.

Since 2007 and for five consecutive years, Adel has been awarded 'Airline CEO of the year' by various industry forums. He was named 'World's best Low-Cost Carrier CEO' during the World LCC Congress in 2008. He entered the "Hall of Fame Award" in 2010, honoring his contribution to the Middle East Aviation.

In 2011, Adel was named "Business Leader of the Year" at the Middle East Accountancy and Finance Excellence Awards as recognition for establishing Air Arabia as the region's number one low-cost carrier.

Dr. Jeffrey Goh
Acting Chief Executive Officer, Gulf Air

A seasoned professional in the aviation industry, Dr. Jeffrey Goh, the CEO of Gulf Air Group Holding, brings with him a wealth of experience and expertise.

Dr. Goh has a remarkable track record with a passion for driving growth and innovation, leading towards new horizons.

Having served as the CEO of Star Alliance since 2017, Dr. Goh has established himself as a respected figure in the global airline alliance. His tenure at Star Alliance spanned over a decade, during which he played various roles in shaping the organization's success.

Prior to his work at Star Alliance, Dr. Goh made significant contributions at the International Air Transport Association (IATA) and held a prominent position at a prestigious law firm, Beaumont and Son, in London.

With a deep understanding of the complexities of the aviation industry, Dr. Goh is well-equipped to lead Gulf Air and Gulf Air Group Holding, a conglomerate that comprises the National Carrier of the Kingdom of Bahrain, Gulf Air, as well as Bahrain Airport Company, BAC Jet Fuel Company, and Gulf Aviation Academy.

Additionally, the Group holds substantial shares in Bahrain Airport Services and Bahrain Duty Free, reinforcing its significant presence in the aviation market.

Dr. Goh has a law degree from the University of Hull in England. He earned his Ph.D. in Aviation from the University of Sheffield, UK.

Dr. Venkataramani Sumantran
Chairman, Indigo Airlines

Dr. Venkataramani Sumantran is the Chairman and Non-Executive Independent Director of IndiGo. In May 2020, Dr. Venkataramani Sumantran joined IndiGo Airlines as an Independent Non-Executive Director. His appointment as Chairman in 2022 marked a significant transition, bringing his vast experience in international markets and technology to the airline industry. Under his leadership, IndiGo has been poised for ambitious overseas expansion, leveraging his insights into global practices and tecahnological advancements.

IndiGo made headlines at the Paris International Airshow when it placed record breaking orders for 500 Airbus aircraft. Dr. Sumantran and founder of IndiGo Rahul Bhatia were present at the show signing the deal.

Dr. Sumantran's leadership at IndiGo Airlines reflects his commitment to integrating technological innovation and strategic expansion, reinforcing the airline's position in the global aviation market.

Dr. Sumantran, is a business leader, technocrat and academic, having worked in the USA, Europe, and Asia through a career spanning over 37 years. He is currently the Chairman and Managing Director of Celeris Technologies, a strategic advisory firm engaged in the domains of automotive, mobility, digital transformation, and technologies. He also serves on the Boards of Rane Holdings Limited, and TVS Electronics Limited.

Beyond his corporate roles, Dr. Sumantran has contributed to academia and government advisory bodies. He has served on the Science Advisory Council to the Prime Minister of India and the Scientific Advisory Committee to the Indian Cabinet. He was also the Lead Member of the Consultative Group on Future Transportation at the Office of the Principal Scientific Adviser to the Government of India. His academic engagements include positions as a Distinguished Visiting Professor at IIT Madras and Adjunct Professor at the Malaysia Institute for Supply Chain Innovation (MISI).

Mesfin Tasew
Group Chief Executive Officer
Ethiopian Airlines

Mesfin Tasew was appointed Group Chief Executive Officer of Ethiopian Airlines in March 2022.

He assumed the post after Group CEO Tewolde GebreMariam retired early due to health reasons.

Tasew joined Ethiopian in 1984 as Associate Engineer and progressed through the ladder and served in supervisorial and managerial positions in the Aircraft Maintenance and Engineering areas. In 1997 and 1999, he was appointed as Director of Operations & Technical Systems Support and Chief Information Officer, respectively.

In 2006, Tasew was appointed the airline's Vice President for Maintenance and Engineering. He also served as Chief Operating Officer of Ethiopian Airlines from 2010 – 2021, and Chief Executive Officer of ASKY Airlines from April 2021 to March 2022.

Currently, Tasew serves as a member of the International Air Transport Association (IATA) Board of Governors.

Tasew holds BSC and MSc Degrees in Electrical Engineering from Addis Ababa University. He also holds a Master's in Business Administration (MBA) from the Open University in the UK.

As CEO of Dubai's first low-cost carrier flydubai, Ghaith Al Ghaith is responsible for the strategic direction of the airline, working closely with its Chairman, His Highness Sheikh Ahmed Bin Saeed Al Maktoum.

Prior to ydubai, Al Ghaith had a long track record in aviation with Emirates Airline where his positions included Executive VicePresident Commercial Operations Worldwide, Area Manager UK and Ireland, and GM Commercial Operations Europe and North America. At the helm of ydubai since its inception on 1 June 2009, he has brought together a dynamic team to build a single eet type of 58 Next-Generation Boeing 737-800 aircraft and will take delivery of more than 100 aircraft by the end of2023.

The airline ies to a network of more than 115 destinations in 54 countries across Africa, Central Asia, the Caucasus, Central and South-East Europe, the GCC and the Middle East, and the Indian Subcontinent.

Al Ghaith is keen to draw attention to how ydubai's brand livery came about – a striking blend of blue and orange representing Dubai's climate, landscape and coastline. He explains: "We are very proud to carry the UAE ag and we wanted to have a very clear connection to Dubai in our livery."

Al Ghaith holds a Bachelor of Science Degree in Business Administration from the University of Arizona, USA. He was awarded Personal Achievement of the Year at the Aviation Business Awards 2011, as well as Aviation CEO of the Year at both the 2011 and 2009 CEO Middle East Awards.

Ghaith Al Ghaith
CEO, Flydubai

AVM Muhammad Amir Hayat
CEO, Pakistan International Airlines

AVM Muhammad Amir Hayat has been serving as the Acting Chief Executive Officer of the Pakistan International Airlines Corporation Limited (PIACL) since January 1, 2025.

From April 2022 to December 2024, AVM Hayat also served as the CEO of PIACL which operates Pakistan International Airlines, the national airline of Pakistan.

An Aerospace Engineering graduate from the Pakistan Air Force Academy, Hayat was commissioned in the Engineering Branch of Pakistan Air Force in 1990.

During his illustrious career spanning over three decades, AVM Hayat has served in PAF at various levels of aviation engineering and management. His diplomatic experience includes appointment as Technical Attaché to Beijing, China.

He has also commanded an Engine MRO and held the portfolio of Managing Director, Aircraft Rebuild Factory, Pakistan Aeronautical Complex. Following his notable contributions to PAF, he was subsequently deputed to PIACL.

AVM Hayat's rich and vast experience has gained him a deep insight of the military as well as commercial aviation industry. In recognition of his outstanding services, he was awarded the coveted Sitara-i-Imtiaz (Military).

Apart from his Aerospace Engineering degree from PAF Academy, AVM Hayat also holds a Master's degree in Business Administration and another Master's degree in National Security and War Studies from the prestigious National Defense University.

József Váradi was one of the founders of Wizz Air in 2003. He worked at Procter and Gamble for 10 years between 1991 and 2001, and became Sales Director for Global Customers where he was responsible for major clients throughout 11 EU countries.

He then joined Malév Hungarian Airlines, the Hungarian state airline, as Chief Commercial Officer in 2001, before serving as its Chief Executive Officer from 2001 to 2003. He has also held board memberships with companies such as Lufthansa Technik Budapest (Supervisory Board, 2001-2003), Mandala Airlines (Board of Commissioners, 2007-2011), JetSMART (Board of Directors 2018 – to date).

In 2007, Váradi won the EY Hungary "Brave Innovator" award and became the EY "Entrepreneur of the Year" in 2018. Váradi holds a Master's degree in Economics from the Budapest University of Economic Sciences and a Master of Laws Degree from the University of London.

József Váradi
Co-founder & CEO, Wizz Air

Eng. Samer Abdelsalam Majali
Vice Chairman/Board Designee CEO Royal Jordanian Airlines

Eng. Samer Abdelsalam Majali has been designated the Chief Executive Officer of Royal Jordanian, the flag carrier of the Kingdom of Jordan, since 2021.

With more than 40 years of experience in the aviation industry, Eng. Majali brings with him a wealth of experience and expertise with RJ that is ushering it to growth and expansion within the region and beyond.

Prior to his appointment at RJ, Eng. Majali founded Plane Vision, a Corporate Strategy & Organization Advisory in Bahrain. He also held the position of Senior Advisor at Alton Aviation Consultancy in New York and Dublin.

Between 2013 and 2019, Eng. Majali was appointed Chief Executive Officer of Saudi Gulf Airlines, which was formed in 2013 by Abdel Hadi Abdullah Al-Qahtani & Sons Group of Companies.

From 2013 to 2014, he was appointed the Senior Advisor to the Chairman of Oman Air (Omani Minister of Finance). Before that, from 2009 until 2012, Majali ran Gulf Air as its Chief Executive Officer.

His career in aviation began when he worked at RJ in 1979 with an illustrious career that gave him top executive positions across Flight Operations, Corporate Planning, Information Technology, Passenger

Services, Engineering, and Maintenance. He ran the airline as the President and CEO between 2001 and

2009 and was credited for transforming RJ into one of the most successful in the region.

Eng. Majali holds a Master's degree in Air Transport Management from Cranfield Institute of Technology

(UK), and a Bachelor's degree in Aeronautical Engineering and Design from Loughborough University of Technology (UK).

Blake Scholl founded Boom Supersonic in September 2014 with the goal of making high-speed travel mainstream and enabling a new world of human connection. Blake is passionate about tackling big problems that the world has overlooked.

After seeing Concorde in a museum, he dreamed of the return of commercial supersonic flight. A few years later, Blake dove into aerospace engineering—reading textbooks and taking classes—to figure out from first principles how to enable a supersonic renaissance. As a leader, Blake focuses on inspiring the best people from a range of disciplines to unite in pursuit of Boom's vision.

Prior to founding Boom, Blake held leadership roles at Amazon and Groupon and co-founded mobile technology startup Kima Labs. He started his career at Amazon as a software engineer in 2001, where he developed software for personalized and automated merchandising and later owned a $300M P&L at age 24.

Blake pioneered the automation of digital ad buying, enabling advertisers to build their own "long tail" by promoting niche products to relevant customers. Later, Blake was the first employee and director of product development at Kleiner-backed mobile startup Pelago. In 2010, he co-founded mobile technology startup Kima Labs, which was acquired by Groupon in 2012. At Groupon, Blake held multiple executive roles, culminating in responsibility for relevance, email, and search.

Blake's interest in aviation started in childhood—he grew up in suburban Cincinnati, where his parents often took him to the local airport to watch Cessnas take off and land. He started flying for fun in college, earning his private pilot license in 2008 and instrument rating in 2011.

Blake holds a BS in Computer Science from Carnegie Mellon University. He lives in Denver and is the father of three.

Blake Scholl
Founder & CEO, Boom Supersonic

Michael Rousseau
President and CEO, Air Canada

Michael Rousseau was appointed President and Chief Executive Officer of Air Canada in February 2021. He had served since January 2019 as Deputy Chief Executive Officer and Chief Financial Officer, adding oversight over several significant corporate initiatives and businesses, including Air Canada Rouge, to his continuing responsibilities for the airline's overall financial strategic direction and related functions since 2007 when he became Executive Vice President and Chief Financial Officer.

In these prior roles, Mr. Rousseau played a significant and highly strategic role in Air Canada's successful transformation over more than a decade. In December 2024, he was elected Chair of the Star Alliance Chief Executive Board (CEB).

Prior to Air Canada, Mr. Rousseau held executive positions, including that of President, at Canada's largest diversified general merchandise retailer, Hudson's Bay Company (HBC). He also held senior executive financial positions at other large, international corporations, including Moore Corporation, Silcorp Limited, and the UCS Group (a division of Imasco Limited).

Mr. Rousseau has been a director of several public companies. He is also a member of the Board of Governors of the International Air Transport Association.

A graduate of York University, Mr. Rousseau has been a member of the Ontario Institute of Chartered Accountants since 1983. He holds the FCA and FCPA designations, conferred by CPA Ontario in recognition of his professional achievements and contributions. He was named Canada's CFO of the Year™ for 2017 by Financial Executives International Canada, PwC Canada and Robert Half.

Bilal Ekşi
CEO & Member of the Board
Turkish Airlines

Bilal Ekşi graduated from Yıldız Technical University, the Department of Electronics and Communications Engineering in 1989.

After graduation, Ekşi worked as an Electronics and Communications Engineer at Turkish State Railways and thereafter, was assigned to the position of Workshop Manager at Istanbul Ulasim A.S., playing an active role in the realization of significant transport projects in Türkiye.

As the Head of Overhaul Workshops at Turkish Airlines Inc., Ekşi carried out the duty of maintenance of aircraft engines, landing gears, and all components between 2003 and 2005.

In 2005, he was assigned as the Chief Ground Operations Officer at Turkish Airlines Inc. where he was credited for accomplishing significant projects, particularly in the improvement of the on-time departure performance.

He also served as the Chief Production Officer at Turkish Technic in 2008 and 2009. He moved on as the General Manager of Cyprus Turkish Airlines as part of the reorganization of Cyprus Turkish Airlines in 2010 and as the Executive Vice President at "Turkish Engine Center (TEC)", established by the Joint Venture of Pratt Whitney, an American engine manufacturer, and Turkish Technic Inc. between 2010 – 2011.

Ekşi was assigned as the Director General of Civil Aviation in April 2011. During his tenure as the Director General of Civil Aviation, Türkiye was re-elected as a member of the Council of International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO) 66 years after the country became a member and one of the 36 members that comprise ICAO's decision-making body.

On October 21, 2016, Ekşi was named as the new CEO of Turkish Airlines. He continues to steer Türkiye's national carrier to reach new heights.

Established in 1933 with just a fleet of five aircraft and fewer than 30 employees, Turkish Airlines, the national carrier of Türkiye, has grown to become one of the world's biggest airlines with a fleet of 487 aircraft, both passenger and cargo, flying to 351 destinations worldwide.

In 2024, Turkish Airlines was recognized by Guinness World Records™ as the title holder of the "Most Countries Flown to by an Airline"— a record which the carrier has held since 2012.

Associations in Aviation

Willie Walsh
Director General, IATA

Willie Walsh became the eighth person to lead the International Air Transport Association (IATA) when he took on the role of Director General in April 2021.

Prior to joining IATA, Walsh spent his entire career in the airline industry, beginning as a cadet pilot with Aer Lingus in 1979 and rising to the position of Chief Executive at the airline in 2001.

In 2005, Walsh was appointed Chief Executive of British Airways (BA). He led BA through the 2008-09 global financial crisis, established a transatlantic joint business venture with Iberia, Finnair and American Airlines, and oversaw the 2011 merger of BA and Iberia under a newly-established parent company, International Airlines Group (IAG). He was Chief Executive of IAG from its inception until September 2020.

Under Walsh's leadership, IATA has focused on supporting the industry's emergence from the COVID-19 crisis as well as aviation's ambitious and historic commitment to achieve net zero carbon emissions by 2050. Walsh has also advocated for infrastructure partners to avoid recouping their COVID losses from their customers including airlines and air travelers.

Walsh is deeply familiar with IATA, having also served on the IATA Board of Governors between 2005 to 2018, including serving as Chair (2016-2017). A citizen of Ireland, Walsh was born in Dublin, Ireland, in 1961. Walsh holds a Master of Science and Business Administration from Trinity College, Dublin.

Steven Polmans is the Chairman of The International Association of Air Cargo (TIACA), now on his second term.

Steven began his career in the aviation industry with a European handling company shortly after earning his university degree in 1995.

After having held several operational and management positions at different airports in handling, he joined Brussels Airport in 2010 as Cargo Marketing Manager and was appointed Head of Cargo and Logistics in 2012. In this position, he was responsible for developing and implementing the overall cargo strategy of the airport.

Steven was also the founding father and first chairman of Air Cargo Belgium, a newly established air cargo organisation at BRUcargo, grouping all stakeholders. In April 2019, Steven was promoted to Director Cargo & Logistics, adding all responsibilities for cargo real estate development and portfolio management to his existing role.

Steven joined the board of TIACA in August 2016 and became Vice Chairman in October 2017. In July 2019, he took over the role of Chairman at TIACA, a position he still holds today.

In January 2021, Steven became the Chief Customer Officer of Nallian, a data-sharing company, building amongst others, the innovative BRUcloud platform. In February 2022, Steven became VP at Abu Dhabi Airports Company to realize its cargo ambitions and growth.

Steven had since moved on to establish his own company, SP-ACE/Air Cargo Experts, a leading consultancy firm specializing in air cargo, dedicated to assisting businesses and organizations across various industries in developing robust strategies and executing them seamlessly.

Steven Polmans
Chairman, TIACA

Justin Erbacci
Director General, Airports Council International

Justin Erbacci began his current role as Director General of Airports Council International (ACI) World in September 2024.

A seasoned aviation professional and visionary leader with a proven track record, Justin previously served as Chief Executive Officer – Airports at NEOM in Saudi Arabia and as Chief Executive Officer of Los Angeles World Airports (LAWA).

Justin also excelled as Chief Operating Officer, Chief IT and Commercial Strategy Officer and Chief IT and Innovation Officer at LAWA.

Prior to his tenure at LAWA, Justin was Vice President of Customer Experience and Technology at the airline alliance Star Alliance Services GmbH. His ability to drive innovation and leverage technology was developed during his IT leadership roles at major global companies such as Credit Suisse and United Airlines. Earlier, he gained experience at management consultancies including Cambridge Management Consultants and Deloitte and Touche. He also practiced law as a civil rights defense litigator.

Justin holds a Master of Business Administration degree from the Vienna School of Economics/University of South Carolina, a Juris Doctor degree from Loyola University of Chicago's School of Law, and a Bachelor of Arts from Loyola University of Chicago.

Juan Carlos Salazar is the Secretary General of the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO). First appointed for a three-year term starting August 2021, the international aviation body renewed his appointment for a second term in 2024.

Salazar's career in international civil aviation spans over 30 years in various advisory and leadership roles.

Prior to his appointment as Secretary General, Salazar served as Director General of Aeronautica Civil of Colombia – Aerocivil. Twelve years prior to joining Aerocivil, he was a Senior Advisor to the UAE General Civil Aviation Authority.

Salazar's professional experience also includes terms as the President of Latin American Civil Aviation Commission (LACAC), Secretary of the Colombian Civil Aviation Board and Director of its Air Transport Office, Director General of Air Transport at the Colombian Ministry of Transport, Corporate Secretary and Director of the Legal Department of Tampa Cargo (currently known as Avianca Cargo).

Salazar is a lawyer and has earned advanced degrees from Harvard University (Master in Public Administration - MPA) and McGill University (Master in Air and Space Law - LLM), and was awarded an Honorary Doctorate degree in Law from Korea Aerospace University. He is fluent in Spanish, English and French, and speaks basic Arabic.

Juan Carlos Salazar
Secretary General, ICAO

Abderahmane Berthe
Secretary General
African Airlines Association

Abderahmane Berthe is the Secretary General of the African Airlines Association (AFRAA). He has held the position since 2018.

AFRAA is the leading trade association of airlines in the African continent founded in Accra, Ghana in 1968. The group represents 50 airlines in Africa which accounts for more than 85% of total international traffic in the continent.

Prior to his appointment at AFRAA, Berthe served as the CEO of Air Mali and Air Burkina.

Berthe has more than 33 years of experience in the airline industry, 16 years of which as airline Chief Executive Officer.

He built his career in various airlines and multicultural environments both in Europe and Africa at positions such as aircraft performance and dispatch engineering, maintenance and operations quality, ground operations and Chief Executive Officer.

Berthe graduated from the French Civil Aviation school in Toulouse (1987 Master of Engineering). Additionally, he took graduate studies in Toulouse at the French Aeronautical and Space School (1988 Master of Science) and from the Business Institute (1989 Master of Business administration). He also obtained a Private Pilot License in 1985 for Single Engine Aircraft.

Kamil Al-Awadhi represents the International Air Transport Association (IATA) in more than 60 countries across AME in his capacity as the Regional Vice President for Africa and the Middle East of IATA.

He leads the execution of IATA's priorities for the region and advocates on behalf of the airline industry to continuously improve safety levels, to enhance connectivity particularly across Africa, to reduce costs for airlines and to ensure the sustainability of air transport.

Prior to joining IATA in 2021, Kamil was the CEO of Kuwait Airways and held various key positions at the airline in the areas of safety, security, quality management and enterprise resource planning over his 31-year career in the aviation industry.

Kamil holds an MBA in Aerospace Management from the Toulouse Business School and an Engineering degree in Aircraft Maintenance Management from Air Service Training (AST) in the UK.

Kamil Al-Awadhi
Regional Vice President, Africa and Middle East, IATA

Kapil Kaul
CEO, CAPA South Asia

Kapil Kaul is the Chief Executive Officer for South Asia of the Centre for Asia Pacific Aviation (CAPA), based in New Delhi. He is responsible for the delivery of all India-based consulting and research projects. He has nearly 25 years of experience in the aviation and hospitality industry.

Kaul's previous roles include that of Product Manager, ITC-Welcomgroup; Vice President, East West Airlines; Chief General Manager, Air Sahara; Vice President, Crown Air; Project Advisor, Kuoni Travel Holdings; and Consultant, Aviation Resources Group.

A BSc holder from Kashmir University, Kaul is ranked in an ITC management program and holds IATA certifications. He is married and has a daughter.

Kaul speaks Hindi and English and is a keen sportsman, writer, and aviation commentator.

Ali Ahmed Alnaqbi
Founding and Executive Chairman, MEBAA

Ali Ahmed Alnaqbi is the Founding and Executive Chairman of the Middle East & North Africa Business Aviation Association (MEBAA) based in the United Arab Emirates.

Alnaqbi is a seasoned industry professional with 35 years of experience in the aviation industry and serves on the Board of several reputed international aviation companies.

He entered the industry as Vice President for Finance & Administration in the Presidential Flight in UAE. In this role, he became involved with VIP air transportation and is the founder of Royal Jet, which is currently one of the world's most award-winning VIP aviation operators. During this period, Alnaqbi realized that there was inadequate knowledge and misconception of business aviation in the region, and in 2006, he began identifying stakeholders to establish MEBAA.

With his vast administrative and financial expertise, which includes aircraft purchase, sale, lease, VIP interior completion, and supervising the construction of the Presidential Flight buildings, Alnaqbi was able to make valuable contributions in the business aviation sector using his expertise to serve (MEBAA) and represent the industry throughout the region.

In 2007, Alnaqbi was elected to represent MEBAA in the International Business Aviation Council (IBAC), based in Canada. In 2017, he was elected to the position of Vice President of the council for a period of 3 years, after which he was elected to chair the IBAC in 2020 to be the first Arab ever to hold this post in the International Council. Alnaqbi was re-elected as Chairman of the council for the second time in a row for a period of three years (2023-2025).

Alnaqbi and MEBAA have spread their influence for business aviation into humanitarian fields with support for the World Food Program (WFP), a body under the United Nations wing that fight hunger through the creation of Fly & Feed donation program.

Alnaqbi has succeeded in encouraging members of this sector in the Middle East and North Africa to achieve a tremendous growth rate by breaking barriers for effective communication among members and working to promote awareness of the role and importance of business aviation among the governments in the region and is a regular speaker at various business aviation forums and conferences and is a recognized authority around the world.

Capt. Amornvaj (Ben) Mansumitchai
President, IFALFA

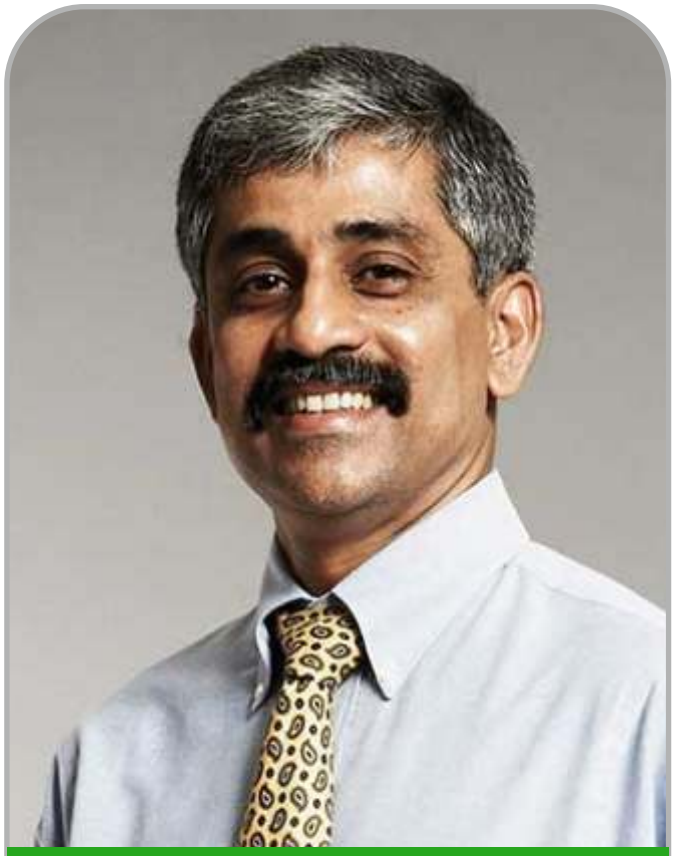
Capt. Amornvaj (Ben) Mansumitchai was elected in May 2023 as the President of The International Federation of Air Line Pilots' Associations (IFALFA). The non-profit group advocates for global aviation safely and represents over 100,000 pilots in more than 70 countries worldwide.

Capt. Mansumitchai, a Thai national, has shown his leadership skills early on by establishing the Thai Pilots Association Technical and Safety Committee, serving as its chairman from 2006-2007.

In 2007, he joined IFALFA as Regional Vice President-Asia East, a position he held through 2011. He also served as the organization's Executive Vice President-Asia-Pacific and Deputy President before becoming the President of IFALFA.

An electrical engineering graduate from Chulalongkorn University in Bangkok, Thailand, Capt. Mansumitchai began his aviation career as a flight engineer at Thai Airways in 1990 before becoming a pilot.

Over the course of his illustrious career, Capt. Mansumitchai has flown the A300-B4, A300-600, B744, B734 (TRE and TRI), A330 & A340 (TRE, TRI, and test pilot), and A380-800 (TRI). He currently flies the A350 for Thai Airways and is also a type rating instructor on the A380.



Subhas Menon
Director General, AAPA

Subhas Menon joined the Association of Asia Pacific Airlines (AAPA) in March 2020. He has more than 35 years of experience in international aviation with the Singapore Airlines Group, having served in a wide spectrum of roles, including international and government relations, marketing, product development, logistics, country and regional management.

In his various roles in the airline industry over the past three decades, Subhas has developed a solid skill set that includes successfully building and managing relationships with different stakeholders, strong communications and public speaking skills as well as commercial acumen honed across different regions.

As Regional Vice President for an Asian airline in various regions around the world, and having also served as Chief Executive of SilkAir, Subhas is familiar with the Asian airline environment, its market dynamics and the region's diverse political landscape.

Building on his early experience in international relations, Subhas has well-developed lobbying and negotiation skills as well as dealing with government affairs, which makes him well-placed to undertake the kind of advocacy and lobbying activities AAPA conducts as a trade association on behalf of its member airlines.

Subhas is a graduate of the National University of Singapore, with a Bachelor of Social Science (Honours) in Sociology.

Women in Aviation

Barbara Baumgartner

Managing Director - FAI rent-a-jet GmbH

Barbara Baumgartner is Managing Director of FAI rent-a-jet GmbH, DMCC Branch, based in Dubai, a position she has held for nearly 14 years. She oversees a 13-strong team with a remit to manage charter sales, operations and medical teams as well as drive business development, planning, budgeting and ongoing customer service to increase satisfaction and retention. Under her leadership, she has grown the company to become the market leader for air ambulance in the Gulf Region.

Baumgartner's long-standing experience in the Middle East, combined with her general management and analytical skills plus an iron will to succeed, have proved vital to FAI's success in the region.

Baumgartner joined FAI in January 2003 as the local representative for the Middle East. She was promoted to the Managing Director role in 2011 when FAI opened its branch office in Dubai. She reports directly to FAI Aviation Group's Chairman and Founder, Siegfried Axtmann.

Baumgartner moved to Dubai in 1997 where she joined CTC Investments as Head of Family Office, Investment and Research Consultant for a Saudi family business conglomerate with a remit to oversee private jet and yacht acquisitions. As part of her role, she conducted due diligence processes and analysis for new private equity and venture capital investment opportunities; conducted continuous research and data analysis for ongoing investment updates and directly oversaw and performed auditing and accounting processes of the family-owned private holding company.

An Austrian native, Baumgartner's first role in the aviation industry came in 1991 when she joined Tyrolean Airways in Austria.

In 2019, Baumgartner was awarded the "Outstanding Employee Award" by Mumtalakat (Sovereign Wealth Fund of the Kingdom of Bahrain, a shareholder of FAI). She is a member of the Investment Committee of Mindshift Capital and also an Angel Investor & Advisor with WAIN, the Woman Angel Investor Network based in Dubai.

FAI rent-a-jet GmbH is the largest Bombardier fleet operator in Germany and among the world's largest air ambulance operators (in terms of revenue). Besides VIP Charter and fully dedicated air ambulance service, (FAI Air Ambulance) the company also specializes in aircraft management, long term lease, aircraft refurbishment and special missions for the world's largest NGO.

Güliz Öztürk

CEO, Pegasus Airlines
First Woman CEO in Turkey's Civil Aviation History

Güliz Öztürk made history in May 2022 when she became the first woman Chief Executive Officer of a leading airline in Turkey.

She was the chief commercial officer (CCO) of Pegasus Airlines when she was appointed to succeed the airline's CEO since 2016, Mehmet T. Nane, who was called to serve as Chair of the International Air Transport Association (IATA) in June 2022.

Nane said he's delighted "to be passing the CEO baton to Güliz Öztürk who has made significant contributions to the growth and development of Pegasus for many years."

Öztürk has a Psychology degree from Boğaziçi University and completed Advanced Management Program at Columbia Business School.

She began her career at Turkish Airlines in 1990 through 2003, serving various key management positions, including handling strategic projects such as the first code-share flights for Turkey's national carrier, its first website, bank card programs, online ticket sales, among others.

Between 2003 and 2005, Öztürk served as Aviation and Tourism Project Coordinator and Director of Human Resources at Ciner Holding.

She joined Pegasus Airlines in 2005 as Head of Sales and Marketing, to manage the launch of the airline's scheduled services. In 2010, she was appointed Chief Commercial Officer (CCO), with responsibility for the commercial department, which includes Sales, Network Planning, Marketing, Revenue Management and Pricing, Cargo and Guest Experience.

A member of the Board of Advisors of Özyeğin University's Faculty of Aviation and Aeronautical Sciences, Öztürk is also co-chair of the Women in Sales (WiSN) social project, established in 2019 to promote gender balance in company sales departments, under the umbrella of the Sales Network platform.

Elena Sorlini
Managing Director & CEO
Abu Dhabi Airports

Elena Sorlini has over 20 years of aviation industry experience and currently holds the position of Managing Director and Chief Executive Officer at Abu Dhabi Airports.

Abu Dhabi Airports, formed in 2006, plays an important role in Abu Dhabi's economic vision and aviation development. It operates five commercial airports in the emirate—the Zayed International Airport, Al Ain International Airport, Al Bateen Executive Airport, Delma Island Airport and Sir Bani Yas Island Airport. It also oversees Abu Dhabi Duty Free and Abu Dhabi Airports Free Zone

Sorlini is also a member of the Board at Abu Dhabi Airports, Etihad Airways, Abu Dhabi Aviation and ADQ Aviation and Aerospace Services.

Sorlini has held executive positions globally in the wider aviation ecosystem, including Vice President of Strategic Planning at Oman Aviation Group and Director of Strategy at Copenhagen Airports. Prior to that, she was Vice President at Macquarie Airports, one of the largest private airport owners and operators, where she was responsible for the asset management activities of Rome Airports and Copenhagen Airports.

Sorlini holds a Bachelor's degree in Business Administration, majoring in Planning and Control from Bocconi University, and a Master's degree in Corporate Finance. She also holds an Executive Master of Business Administration (EMBA) from Copenhagen Business School.

Marie joined the International Air Transport Association (IATA) from Lombard Odier where she was Head of Global Trends and Sustainability. .

Her 30-year professional life includes roles for both investment banks and private banks, including HSBC in London, Merrill Lynch in Paris, and Indosuez in Geneva. Outside of the financial sector Marie worked for IKEA, and she also founded and managed her own company in the equine industry.

Marie holds an MBA from the University of Gothenburg in Sweden, and a Ph.D. in International Economics from the Graduate Institute in Geneva, Switzerland. She speaks Swedish, English, and French fluently.

Marie Owens Thomsen
Senior Vice President Sustainability and Chief Economist, IATA

Poppy Khoza
Director of Civil Aviation, SACAA

Poppy Khoza is a seasoned aviation professional and a leading figure in the global civil aviation industry. As the Director of Civil Aviation at the South African Civil Aviation Authority (SACAA), she oversees the regulatory framework and operational standards of civil aviation in South Africa, ensuring compliance with international safety and security protocols.

Known for her visionary leadership, Khoza has been instrumental in driving strategic initiatives that position South Africa as a key player in the aviation sector. Under her guidance, SACAA has achieved several milestones, including enhanced safety oversight measures and operational excellence recognized by the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO).

In June 2024, Khoza played a pivotal role in fostering international collaboration by spearheading the signing of a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the Sierra Leone Civil Aviation Authority. This partnership aimed to enhance capacity building, technical cooperation, and knowledge sharing between the two nations, exemplifying her commitment to advancing global aviation standards.

Khoza's dedication to promoting innovation and sustainability in aviation has earned her numerous accolades and respect within the industry. A strong advocate for gender equality, she is actively involved in initiatives that empower women in aviation.

With her deep expertise and unwavering commitment to excellence, Khoza continues to inspire transformation within the aviation sector, ensuring that South Africa remains at the forefront of global aviation advancements.

Reem Al Saffar of the United Arab Emirates was elected Vice Chair of the International Civil Aviation Organization's (ICAO) Aerodrome Operations Working Group (AOWG).

The UAE General Civil Aviation Authority said this marks the first time a representative from the Middle East and African region has held a leadership position in the ICAO Aerodrome Design and Operations Panel working groups, highlighting the UAE's pioneering role in the global aviation industry.

The AOWG is tasked with developing ICAO Standards, Recommended Practices, and Guidance Material for Aerodrome Operations.

Reem is a Senior Manager in the Aerodromes Division of the UAE GCAA, overseeing the safety oversight operations and developments of aerodromes in airports in the UAE.

She began her aviation career in 2012 as a graduate trainee. In 2018, she moved to the UAE GCAA and became the first female Emirati Aerodrome Operations Inspector overseeing UAE airports.

She was awarded a Dubai Medal for the Best Field Employee, and a GCAA Director General's Award for her exceptional achievements in the civil aviation industry.

Reem holds a Bachelor's degree in e-Commerce/electronic Commerce from the Higher Colleges of Technology and a Master's degree in International Business from the University of Wollongong in Dubai.

Reem Al Saffar
Vice Chair, ICAO Aerodrome Operations
First Female Emirati Aerodrome Operations Inspector in the UAE

Dr. Nadia Bastaki
Chief People & Corporate Affairs Officer Etihad Aviation Group

Dr. Nadia Bastaki was appointed Chief People and Corporate Affairs Officer of Etihad Aviation Group in November 2021, having previously served as Vice President Medical Services since 2014.

As Chief, Dr. Bastaki is responsible for Etihad's people and wellbeing strategy, inclusive of employment engagement, employee experience and diversity and inclusion, and leads all core HR functions from reward and performance to manpower and talent management, and learning and development. She is also responsible for the Asset Management Department.

Having joined Etihad in 2007, Dr. Bastaki has been a key figure in the development of the Etihad Airways Medical Centre, one of the region's leading healthcare centers in the field of aviation medicine. She represents the first-ever appointment of a female chief executive at the Etihad Aviation Group, in addition to being the first female UAE national to specialize in aviation medicine.

Dr. Bastaki has nearly 20 years of experience as a medical practitioner and holds a Master's degree in Occupational Medicine from Manchester University as well as a diploma in Aviation Medicine from King's College London.

Mitsuko Tottori is the first female President of Japan Airlines (JAL), the national airline of Japan. She is also the CEO of JAL Group which includes JAL, Japan Air Commuter, Japan Transocean Air, JAL Cargo, among many others related to air transport, real estate, domestic feeder services and aviation-related services.

Mitsuko, who is turning 61 on 31 December 2025, was named to her posts in 2024, becoming the first woman to become the President and CEO in the country's aviation industry, a rare feat in the male-dominated Japanese society.

Mitsuko began her aviation career as a flight attendant. She worked in that field for 20 years before her promotion a managerial role, Senior Director for Cabin Attendants Office, in 2015. A year later, she was again promoted as Vice President for Narita Cabin Attendants.

JAL said Mitsuko's promotion to the highest post at JAL was a result of her outstanding leadership, hard work and dedication that had earned her "a high level of insight and field experience in safe flight operations and service through her career as a cabin attendant and through her work with Corporate Safety & Security."

In an interview with Airlines, a publication of the International Air Transport Association (IATA), Mitsuko said Japan is aiming for 60 million tourists annually by 2030 and JAL is optimistic to contribute to this goal.

"Japan has abundant tourism resources, and we believe that demand will continue to grow. By 2030, we aim to increase international flights 1.4 times compared with today's level. That growth will be a combination of JAL, our full-service offering, and ZIPAIR, our low-cost international offering," Mitsuko told Airlines.

Mitsuko graduated from Kwassui Women's Junior College. She is ranked as No. 5 on Fortune's list of Most Powerful Women in Asia.

Mitsuko Tottori
President, Japan Airlines CEO, JAL Group

Audrey Serdjebi
Founder and CEO, Lemon Queen

In 2019, Audrey Serdjebi founded Lemon Queen, the only communication agency exclusively dedicated to tackling the challenges of the air freight industry. Under her leadership, the agency has become a key player in the field, partnering with major industry names such as Qatar Airways, ECS Group, WestJet Cargo, Challenge Group, among others.

Lemon Queen provides comprehensive communication and marketing strategies, including press relations, social media management, graphic design, branding campaigns, and event organization.

In October 2024, Audrey launched Lemon Green, Lemon Queen's eco-responsible division. Focused on sustainability, Lemon Green offers innovative solutions such as environmentally friendly event stands and partnerships with NGOs, while promoting sustainable communication practices. This initiative reflects Audrey's deep commitment to wildlife preservation and reducing environmental impact in the aviation sector.

Before founding Lemon Queen, Audrey spent 8 years as the Chief Communication Officer at ECS Group, where she played a pivotal role in developing the company's global communication strategy. Her visionary approach significantly enhanced ECS Group's international reputation and introduced groundbreaking campaigns like the NexGenLeaders challenge.

With nearly 20 years of experience, Audrey has also worked across diverse sectors including culture, politics, NGOs, and B2B marketing. This extensive expertise allows her to manage complex projects and create campaigns that blend creativity with measurable results. Driven by her belief in innovation and sustainability, Audrey continues to lead Lemon Queen with passion and ambition.

Yvonne Manzi Makolo has been the Chief Executive Officer of RwandAir, the national airline of Rwanda, since 2018.

In 2023, Yvonne became the first woman to Chair the International Air Transport Association (IATA) Board of Governors. She has been with the Board since 2020.

Yvonne started her aviation career in 2017 when she was appointed as RwandAir's Deputy CEO in Charge of Corporate Affairs. She was named CEO in April 2018.

Yvonne brought 11 years of commercial expertise to her current role, having joined telecommunications company MTN Rwanda in 2006, rising to the positions of Chief Marketing Officer and Acting CEO.

Under her leadership, RwandAir has become one of Africa's fastest growing airlines with a fleet of 13 modern aircraft. She has led cultural change at the airline with a focus on inclusion and diversity and growing the number of women in under-represented roles.

She has spearheaded the cultural transformation of the airline, with strong focus on inclusion and diversity and increasing the number of women in underrepresented roles.

Yvonne has a Bachelor's degree in Geography and Environment from McGill University in Montreal, Canada.

Yvonne Manzi Makolo
CEO, RwandAir
Chair, IATA Board of Governors

Mervat Sultan
President, Women in Aviation ME Chapter

Mervat Sultan has been serving as the President of the Women in Aviation Middle East Chapter since 2013.

She holds the record as one of the first women in the Arab world to obtain an FAA GCAA flight dispatch license. The Syria-born Sultan, who also has a private flying license, first emigrated to Saudi Arabia before moving to the Emirates.

Outside of the organization, Sultan is busy working as a finance manager at Ramjet Aviation, a private aviation company that specializes in the acquisition, sale, and appraisal of corporate aircraft. The company is based in Ras Al Khaimah, one of the seven emirates in the United Arab Emirates.

As president and co-founder of Women in Aviation in the Middle East, Sultan paved the way for women in the industry in the region to be recognized while promoting education and inspiring other women to empower themselves. The group is also actively involved in various outreach projects.

A passionate flying enthusiast, Sultan was inducted as a fellow at the Royal Aeronautical Society in 2017.

Kirsten de Bruijn is West Jet's Executive Vice-President for Cargo.

De Bruijn brings with her a large portfolio of air cargo experience and more than 15 years in the airline industry. She joins WestJet Cargo most recently from Qatar Airways, where she served as Senior Vice President Cargo Sales and Network Planning.

During her time at Qatar Airways, de Bruijn managed the airline's global cargo sales organization including product development and marketing and was responsible for the freighter network planning department. Prior to her tenure at Qatar Airways, de Bruijn served as Vice President, Cargo Pricing and Interline at Emirates Sky Cargo.

"Kirsten has demonstrated consistent and proven success in driving strategic growth for an impressive portfolio of Cargo businesses around the globe," said Alexis von Hoensbroech, WestJet CEO. "As WestJet Cargo enters a pivotal moment of providing much-needed competitive choice and prices to customers across our network and beyond, there is no better leader for the task."

As WestJet's Executive Vice-President, Cargo, de Bruijn will play an instrumental role in building the airline's dedicated cargo capabilities and service offerings, while growing a high-performing cargo organization capable of succeeding within a rapidly evolving market.

De Bruin is a graduate of Zuyd Hogeschool | Zuyd University of Applied Sciences, in the Netherlands. She also studied at London Business School.

Kirsten de Bruijn
Executive Vice-President Cargo, West Jet

Liana Coyne
Chief Operating Officer, Coyne Airways
Board Member, TIACA

Liana Coyne is the Chief Operating Officer of Coyne Airways, the pioneering non-asset-based cargo airline. Coyne Airways specializes in scheduled and chartered flights to niche destinations, including Armenia, Georgia, Iraq, Afghanistan, and around the Caucasus, Central Asia, and Africa.

Liana also served as a member of the Board of Directors of The International Air Cargo Association (TIACA), a unique non-profit organization representing the whole global air cargo community—shippers, freight forwarders, ground handlers, airports, airlines, manufacturers, solution providers as well as cargo media, universities, and the academia.

She recently joined the Board of Advisors of Cargo AI, a company that seeks to create value-added digital solutions for the air cargo community by providing an e-booking platform, that simplifies and facilitates the process and provides actionable information and intelligence.

Liana is an Oxford University graduate and practiced as a solicitor with the international law firm Baker & McKenzie for six years prior to joining the family business in 2010. She is based in Coyne Airways' Dubai office.

Dorothea von Boxberg became the new CEO of Brussels Airlines in April 2023. With her appointment, she also assumed the role of the "Representative of the Executive Board to the European Commission."

Prior, she served as the Chairperson of the Executive Board and CEO of Lufthansa Cargo AG since 1 March 2021. Her responsibilities include Business Development and Cooperation, Legal Affairs, Communications and Corporate Responsibility, Information Management, and Digital Transformation, as well as Finance and Controlling.

Von Boxberg began her professional career in 1999 at the strategic management consultancy Boston Consulting Group. She worked in various industries and several countries. In 2005, she left to join the Star Alliance management company, where she was responsible for strategy.

In 2007, she took her örst position at Lufthansa in the 'Strategy and Subsidiaries' division, which she headed from 2009 onwards. From 2012, she was responsible for the customer experience of Lufthansa Passenger Airlines on board as well as on the ground in several positions.

In 2015, von Boxberg moved to Lufthansa Cargo and headed the Global Sales Management division. In August 2018, she was appointed to the Executive Board of Lufthansa Cargo AG as Chief Commercial Officer.

Von Boxberg studied Industrial Engineering at TU Berlin and as part of a double degree program at ESCP Paris.

Dorothea von Boxberg
CEO, Brussels Airlines

Carol B. Tomé
CEO, UPS

Carol B. Tomé is the Chief Executive Officer of UPS. She is the 12th CEO in the 114-year history of the company.

Before joining UPS, Carol served as Executive Vice President and Chief Financial Officer of The Home Depot, Inc., one of the world's largest retailers. She joined the company in 1995 as Vice President and Treasurer.

Carol began her career as a commercial lender with United Bank of Denver (now Wells Fargo) and then spent several years as Director of Banking for Johns-Mansville Corporation. Prior to joining The Home Depot, Carol was Vice President and Treasurer of Riverwood International Corporation.

Carol serves as board member for Verizon Communications, Inc. and is a board trustee for Grady Memorial Hospital Corporation and the Atlanta Botanical Garden. She is also a member of The Committee of 200, The Buckhead Coalition, The Business Council and the International Business Council of The World Economic Forum.

A native of Jackson, Wyoming, Carol holds a Bachelor's Degree in Communication from the University of Wyoming and a Master's Degree in Finance from the University of Denver.

"UPS is a company with a proud past and an even brighter future. Our values define us. Our culture differentiates us. Our strategy drives us. At UPS we are customer first, people led and innovation driven," Carol proudly says.

Freshta Farzam is the CEO and Founder of LYTE Aviation. A visionary business venture she formed in 2020 which today has the support of global leaders and investors in the aviation industry.

Her responsibilities include business development and strategic collaborations with key partners and suppliers, operators, government entities, universities, and research institutes up to infrastructure partners airports/vertiports, energy providers (SAF & hydrogen), communications and corporate responsibility, as well as technical management, legal affairs, and finance & ESG. She also takes care of global sales, revenue management, and simultaneously, product development.

Born in 1981 in Hamburg, Germany, Farzam first studied Sociology and Psychology for her Bachelor's degree and later took up International Management and Foreign Trade for her Master's at the University of Applied Sciences (HAW) Hamburg.

Farzam started her career in 2010 at the strategic management consultancy Deloitte and worked afterward in various industries and several countries, such as for coal and steel industries up to green hydrogen, direct air capture, and biomass in Europe or the US. Today, she is a German Entrepreneur who believes that a bold mindset, sharp focus, and passionate co-creation is the solution that enables innovation and advancement in passenger and cargo transportation worldwide.

Farzam has more than 10 years of experience in the green energy and aviation industries. At LYTE Aviation, she is pioneering the heavyweight 40seater hybrid-hydrogen eVTOL aircraft that expands the horizons of current dimensions, shapes, and opportunities of passenger and cargo transport, disrupting the mass transit markets from buses, trains, and ferries to helicopters and regional aviation.

Freshta Farzam
CEO & Founder, LYTE Aviation - Pioneering 40seater eVTOL

Aireen Omar
President (Airasia Digital), Airasia Group

Aireen Omar is President of Airasia Group (Airasia Digital). She is responsible for the airline's digital strategy, promoting innovation throughout the group and encouraging collaboration across AirAsia's businesses and markets.

She oversees large, digital strategic group-wide initiatives to help transform AirAsia Group into a global, cloud and data-driven and platform company. At airasia Digital, Aireen is also pivotal in incubating and growing the digital and fintech businesses such as BigLife, BigPay, Teleport, Santan and in transforming airasia.com into more than just an airline platform.

She is also a non-executive director of Tune Protect Group Berhad.

Prior to this, Aireen was AirAsia Malaysia Executive Director and CEO. She joined AirAsia in January 2006 as Director of Corporate Finance, portfolio expanding quickly to also include Treasury, Fuel Procurement and Investor Relations functions. Taking on these roles, she was instrumental in shaping the development of AirAsia into one of the fastest growing and most highly-acclaimed airlines globally.

Aireen is an Economics graduate of the London School of Economics and Political Science and also holds a Master's Degree in Economics from New York University.

Tulsi Nowlakha Mirchandaney is the Managing Director and Accountable Manager for Blue Dart Aviation, India's first and only scheduled domestic cargo airline, with a fleet of six Boeing 757 freighters.

Tulsi's responsibility spans the organization's flight and ground operations, in-house security, airframe line and heavy maintenance, and ground handling activities, with a workforce of over 1200 committed professionals.

During Tulsi's tenure, Blue Dart Aviation, the only cargo airline that has sustained its operations in India for the past 25 years, expanded its capacity with the phase-out of the classic B737-200 freighters, replacing them with the more fuel-efficient B757 freighters.

Tulsi has been instrumental in expanding the company's dedicated infrastructure across airports and bringing about policy changes in civil aviation to include the significant role of air express and support the distinctive requirements for the sustainability of the cargo airline industry in the country.

Tulsi Mirchandaney
Managing Director, Blue Dart Aviation

Badr Abbas
Divisional SVP, Emirates SkyCargo

Badr Abbas is Emirates SkyCargo's Divisional Senior Vice President, succeeding Nabil Sultan, who was appointed Executive Vice President, Passenger Sales and Country Management, Emirates in 2024.

Prior to his new role, Abbas was the Senior Vice President - Commercial Operations Far East, responsible for the development of commercial operations in the region which covers 11 countries from Indonesia to Japan.

Abbas began his career at Emirates as a management trainee in 2000. He had since climbed up the corporate ladder holding various positions in Pakistan, Saudi Arabia, Tunisia and Cyprus, before becoming Vice President Commercial Operations UAE & Oman in 2012. Badr's new area of responsibility spans 11 countries from Indonesia to Japan.

Emirates SkyCargo is increasing its critical main deck cargo capacity this year as global demand for its specialist product portfolio increases.

"We anticipate that demand will continue to boom, reflecting Dubai's prominence as a global logistics hub. Enhancing our cargo capabilities is essential to support Dubai's Economic Agenda, enabling us to reach new destinations, bolster our current operations and elevate our specialist product portfolio," Abbas said.

Amar Preet Singh
Air Chief Marshal, Indian Air Force

Air Chief Marshal (ACM) Amar Preet Singh took over as the 28th Chief of the Air Staff as the incumbent Air Chief Marshal V. R. Chaudhari retired from service after a three-year stint in the top post.

Air Chief Marshal Amar Preet Singh, a highly decorated officer, was commissioned into the Indian Air Force's fighter stream on December 21, 1984. He is an alumnus of the National Defence Academy, Defence Services Staff College, and the National Defence College. A Qualified Flying Instructor and Experimental Test Pilot, he has accumulated over 5,000 flying hours across a range of fixed and rotary-wing aircraft.

His operational tenures include serving as the Commanding Officer of a MiG-27 Squadron and as the Air Officer Commanding of a frontline air base. As a test pilot, he led the MiG-29 Upgrade Project Management Team in Moscow, Russia. He also served as the Project Director (Flight Test) at the National Flight Test Centre, overseeing the flight testing of the Tejas. His staff appointments include Air Defence Commander at HQ South Western Air Command and Senior Air Staff Officer at HQ Eastern Air Command. He later assumed the role of Air Officer Commanding-in-Chief of the Central Air Command. Before becoming the Chief of the Air Staff, he served as the Vice Chief of the Air Staff.

Bernhard zur Strassen
Managing Director, time:matters

Bernhard zur Strassen is the Managing Director and CEO of time:matters GmbH.

Zur Strassen has extensive experience in international management for logistics service providers and shippers. He began his logistics career at Lufthansa Cargo, where he authored his thesis for his business studies.

He then held several international positions at Kühne + Nagel, a logistics service provider, in Switzerland, England, and Luxembourg. Subsequently, he oversaw the global transportation network and later managed the logistics and supply chain for a worldwide automotive industry supplier.

At time:matters, he will drive international growth with customers, digitalisation and sustainability. Lufthansa Cargo acquired the logistics company in August 2016. It has since established itself as a global provider of time-critical emergency transport and supply chain solutions.

François Biarneix
Operations Director, Vallair

François Biarneix is the Operations Director of Vallair, the mature aircraft asset specialist dedicated to the support of operators and lessors, with facilities in Luxembourg, Châteauroux and Montpellier in France.

Based in Chateâuroux, Biarneix oversees the strategic deployment and operations of Vallair's aerostructure and composite shop, engine shop, logistics department, and aircraft dismantling activities.

Biarneix brings a wealth of management experience, further strengthening Vallair's senior team and capabilities. His work history spans over two decades, including the role of Technical Manager for a supplier specializing in the parts production for Airbus and Safran programs, and later as a Plant Manager in the automotive sector.

During Biarneix's career he headed the team that successfully transferred A330 component production from Airbus' Nantes facility to their Indraero facility. This included the creation and expansion of a technical department and orchestrating significant plant transformation, resulting in substantial revenue growth.

Johan Eidhagen
MD, Wizz Air Abu Dhabi

Johan Eidhagen is currently the Managing Director of Wizz Air Abu Dhabi. He joined the company in January 2015 as the Head of Brand and Marketing and later became the Chief Marketing Officer.

In November 2019, he was appointed as the Chief People Officer and took on the additional role of ESG and People Officer in June 2021. In April 2023, he became the managing director of Wizz Air Abu Dhabi.

Prior to joining Wizz Air, Eidhagen had an extensive sales and marketing career at Nokia. He held various senior global and regional marketing positions at the company, starting in 1998. He worked in different locations, including DC1-Internal Data the Nordic region, Nokia headquarters in Finland, New York, and Sweden, serving as Country Manager and Managing Director for the Scandinavian region.

Eidhagen is a graduate of the IHM Business School in Stockholm, where he studied marketing.

Eng. Loay Mashabi
CEO, Saudia Cargo

Eng. Loay Mashabi is the new CEO and Managing Director of Saudia Cargo, a global leader in the air cargo industry and a member of the world's biggest air cargo alliance, SkyTeam Cargo.

Eng. Mashabi joined Saudia Cargo as board member in August 2021 then as Managing Director in October 2023, bringing a wealth of experience in the transportation and logistics sector.

Prior to joining Saudia Cargo, Eng. Mashabi served as Deputy Minister for Logistics Services at the Ministry of Transportation and Logistics Services, and Deputy Governor for Planning and Development of the General Authority of Customs. He also served as CEO of the inception phase of a Al Soudah destination at Public Investment Fund (PIF)

Under his leadership, Saudia Cargo is focusing on accelerating its growth, expanding its international network, and advancing Saudi Vision 2030's logistics sector goals, enabling the Kingdom's economic transformation.

In 2024, Saudia Cargo hauled 577,870 tons, representing a 27% growth in transported weight and a 13% increase compared to 2023. It also conducted 193,599, flights, a 6% rise year-on-year.

Eng. Mashabi holds an Executive MBA from London Business School and a BSc in Petroleum Engineering from King Fahd University.

Tushar Jani
Chairman, Blue Dart Aviation

Tushar Jani is a renowned figure in the Indian aviation sector, best known for his leadership as the Chairman of Blue Dart Aviation. Under his visionary guidance, Blue Dart has grown to become one of India's leading integrated air logistics and courier companies, serving a critical role in the country's air cargo and logistics infrastructure.

He has over 40 years of experience in the shipping and transport industry, and pioneered inland logistics of sea freight containers to manufacturers.

Under Tushar Jani's leadership, Blue Dart Aviation has made significant contributions to India's air cargo sector, expanding the company's fleet and network to enhance its capabilities in serving domestic and international logistics requirements. His vision helped Blue Dart Aviation achieve a key milestone with the introduction of specialized aircraft for cargo services, establishing the company as an integral part of the supply chain for many industries, especially pharmaceuticals, e-commerce, and retail.

Dietmar Focke
MD, Lufthansa Industry Solutions

Dietmar Focke is the Managing Director at Lufthansa Industry Solutions, the service company for IT consulting and system integration within the Lufthansa Group.

The 51-year-old engineering graduate has headed the Operations division since March 1, 2022,

responsible for Global Handling Management, Flight Operations, Security and most of Lufthansa Cargo's equity investments.

Dietmar Focke began his career in 2001 as a product engineer at Lufthansa Technik. His major milestones in recent years have included the continuation of the comprehensive LCC Evolution infrastructure program, which includes the further development and renewal of the logistics center at the home hub in Frankfurt. He was also responsible for the successful expansion of the A321 freighter fleet to four A321 freighters.

Focke has been instrumental in the successful development of an e-commerce product for Lufthansa Cargo.

Aravind Melligeri
Chairman and CEO, Aequs Group

Aravind Melligeri is a visionary leader and the Chairman and CEO of AEQUS Group, a diversified global manufacturing conglomerate with a strong presence in the aerospace, automotive, and industrial sectors.

Aravind is a first-generation entrepreneur who has built India's foremost vertically integrated aerospace manufacturing ecosystem over the last decade that drives scale & efficiency through co-located capabilities delivering end-to-end value streams.

Aravind Melligeri's remarkable career spans over three decades, with a particular emphasis on the aviation and aerospace industries. As the Chairman and CEO of AEQUS, Melligeri has been instrumental in positioning the company as a key player in the global aerospace supply chain. His strategic vision and commitment to excellence have guided AEQUS to become a preferred partner for leading global aviation companies, including suppliers and manufacturers of aircraft components and systems.

Under his leadership, AEQUS Group has been at the forefront of innovations in aviation manufacturing, focusing on precision engineering, advanced materials, and the production of high-quality components for aircraft. AEQUS provides services ranging from product development and design to manufacturing and assembly of aerospace parts. The company's aerospace division works with world-renowned aviation brands, supporting both civil and military aviation sectors.

Murlidhar Mohol

Union Minister of State for Civil Aviation, India

Mr. Murlidhar Mohol has been appointed as the new Union Minister of State for Civil Aviation, taking on a pivotal role in shaping India's aviation sector.

As the Union Minister of State for Civil Aviation, Mr. Mohol is committed to advancing the growth of India's aviation sector. His focus includes expanding regional connectivity to make air travel accessible across the country, enhancing airport infrastructure to meet global standards for smoother travel, and strengthening India's international aviation presence through global partnerships and increased air routes. Additionally, he is dedicated to promoting sustainable aviation practices to address environmental concerns and support eco-friendly travel.

Over the past decade, the ministry has made significant strides in enhancing facilities across various sectors, creating employment opportunities, and rapidly expanding the number of airports.

The ministry has making remarkable progress by establishing global connections and transforming the country's landscape. Mr. Mohol's commitment to ensuring that air travel becomes a reality for every Indian, especially the common people, is central to his approach. He believes that aviation is not just about connectivity but also about uplifting people's economic status and opening up new opportunities for them.

Under Mr. Mohol's leadership, the Civil Aviation Ministry is expected to see significant advancements in both policy and infrastructure. With his strong commitment to inclusive development, Mr. Mohol aims to make air travel a convenient and affordable option for citizens across the country, thereby contributing to India's growth as a global aviation hub.

Vumlunmang Vualnam

Secretary of Civil Aviation, India

Vumlunmang Vualnam, an Indian Administrative Service (IAS) officer of the 1992 batch from the Manipur cadre, assumed the role of Secretary of the Ministry of Civil Aviation (MoCA), Government of India, on September 1, 2023.

Since taking charge at MoCA, Mr. Vualnam has been actively involved in initiatives to enhance India's civil aviation sector. He has emphasized the importance of 'fog planning' to ensure efficient airline operations during winter months, particularly in northern regions prone to fog. Under his leadership, the ministry has focused on improving airport infrastructure and services to accommodate increasing air traffic, especially during peak travel seasons.

His leadership reflects a commitment to advancing India's civil aviation industry, focusing on infrastructure development, operational efficiency, and global partnerships to position India as a significant player in the global aviation ecosystem.

Adil Fareed

CEO, Zead Air FZE

Adil Fareed is a distinguished aviation professional with over two decades of expertise in airline operations, airport management, and business development. He holds a Doctorate in Aviation Management, an MBA in Aviation & Operations Management, and multiple industry certifications. Currently serving as the CEO of Zead Air, he spearheads the airline's strategic growth, operational efficiency, and regulatory compliance.

As a Business Analyst at Fujairah International Airport, he had played a key role in airline route strategy, feasibility studies, and stakeholder engagement. Additionally, he had also overseen logistics and corporate operations as Operations Manager at Kaspian.His tenure at Air Arabia was marked by significant leadership roles, including Head of Operations for Eastern India, Nagpur, and Hyderabad, and Airports Manager for Mumbai and South India, where he optimized airport operations, safety protocols, and service standards. As a Quality Assurance Auditor, Search and Rescue Investigation Team Member, andCrew Recruitment Board Member, he contributed to operational excellence, regulatory compliance, and workforce development.

Previously, Adil served as Airports Manager for FlyNas in India, ensuring seamless operations across multiple international airports. His early career with Saudia Arabian Airlines, The Great India Tour Company (IATA), and Alhind Tours & Travels saw him excel in ticketing, reservations, and corporate sales.With a deep understanding of aviation strategy, safety management, and business development, Adil Fareed remains a driving force in shaping the future of the industry.

Dr. D K Sunil

Chairman and Managing Director
Hindustan Aeronautics Limited (HAL)

Dr. Sunil, who has been serving as the Director of Engineering and R&D at HAL since September 29, 2022, has assumed the additional role of Chairman and Managing Director.

Dr. Sunil joined HAL in 1987 as a Management Trainee and brings nearly 37 years of experience in various roles within the company, making significant contributions to design, production, quality enhancement, and customer support.

Under his leadership, new technologies such as Radar Power Supply, Voice Activated Control System, and Combined Interrogator Transponder were developed, opening up new growth opportunities for the company. A pioneer in fostering collaborations, Dr. Sunil played a key role in establishing partnerships with institutions like IIT Kanpur for datalinks and IIIT Hyderabad for voice recognition technologies. His visionary approach solidified HAL's leadership in advanced technologies.

During his tenure at the Mission Combat Systems R&D Centre in Bengaluru, he led teams on groundbreaking projects including the Active ESA Radar, Automatic Flight Control System for the Light Combat Helicopter (LCH), and Mission Computers for both helicopter and fighter platforms. Under his leadership, HAL achieved significant milestones, including the successful release of military certification for the HTT 40 aircraft program and the acquisition of key projects such as the Indigenous Multi-Role Helicopter (IMRH) for the Indian Air Force and Army, as well as the Utility Helicopter Maritime (UHM) for the Indian Navy.

Matthieu Petot

CEO, CargoAi

Matthieu Petot is the Founder and Chief Executive Officer of CargoAi.

He has 15+ years of experience in Logistics, Airfreight and Innovation. He started his career at DB Schenker Australia before moving to Air France - KLM Cargo and Martinair for six years, where he held several positions, most recently as Africa Area Manager (Supply & Demand).

He subsequently moved to Dyson, where he spent five years, including as Global Head of Business Excellence (after other roles at the company). In 2017, he founded Lending2b.com and In Corporate before founding CargoAi in 2019.

Charles Szar

President, AeroTransCargo

Charles Szar is the President of global cargo airline, AeroTransCargo (ATC), based in Sharjah, United Arab Emirates.

Szar brings with him over 30 years of commercial, civil aviation, and military aviation/aerospace experience to AeroTransCargo from key roles working in the United States, Europe, the Middle East, and Asia.

Since its formation as a charter and leasing cargo airline in 2014, AeroTransCargo has provided international transportation services for shippers, freight forwarders, logistics providers, and charter brokers.

As President, Szar will lead the development strategy for AeroTransCargo as it leverages its key role in the aviation market and looks for further growth opportunities. He will also work closely with Air One Aviation, AeroTransCargo's exclusive global sales agency, to help connect supply chains around the world.

Prior to joining AeroTransCargo, Szar spent four years as CEO of aviation solutions provider Sky One in the UAE. He has a dual Master of Science in Aviation/Aerospace Management and Aviation/Aerospace Safety Systems from Embry Riddle Aeronautical University, and a Bachelor of Science (BSc) in Liberal Arts from Excelsior University.

Dinesh Chand Sharma

Director General Of Civil Aviation (DGCA), India

Dinesh Chand Sharma is an esteemed aviation professional who has been appointed as the Director General of the Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA), following the transfer of Vikram Dev Dutt to the Ministry of Coal.

With years of experience in the aviation industry, Mr. Sharma has made significant contributions to the growth and safety of the Indian aviation sector, ensuring that its regulatory standards align with global practices.

Mr. Sharma has played a pivotal role in shaping policies related to aviation safety, infrastructure development, air traffic management, and sustainability within the industry. His role involves overseeing the implementation of safety regulations, monitoring compliance, and guiding the industry towards greater efficiency and sustainability.

Sunil Malhotra

Managing Director Bchain Consultants

Sunil Malhotra is the Managing Director at Bchain Consultants, providing management consulting across Europe, Middle East, Africa and Asia, with over 29 years of rich experience across the industry.

He works with governments, aviation entities, multinational companies providing subject matter expertise and consulting for the aviation, air cargo, travel, transportation, hospitality, logistics & supply chain sector.

Before joining Bchain, Sunil has led the advisory practice for Big 4 companies like PwC and Ernst & Young directing large scale organization transformation projects comprising performance improvement, investments & deals, risk and governance services, business and operational strategies.

He brings in extensive sector expertise across the air cargo and aviation value chains and ecosystem having worked with Governments, OEMs, Airlines, LLC/FSC Airline operators, Tourism Boards, Airports, Hospitality Companies, DMO's, Travel Consolidators, MRO, Aviation Regulators, ANSP's and ATC's.

Air Marshal Hamid Rashid Randhawa, HI (M)

Member (Ex-Officio) CAA Board & Vice Chief of Air Staff, Pakistan

Air Marshal Hamid Rashid Randhawa, Vice Chief of Air Staff is an Ex-officio Member of Pakistan Civil Aviation Authority Board under Section 6 (1) (b) of Pakistan Civil Aviation Authority Act, 2023.

He was commissioned in Pakistan Air Force in 1988. He has served on various command, staff and instructional appointments during his tenure of service. In operation domain, he has commanded a Fighter Squadron, Flying Wing and an operational Base. In staff appointments, he has worked as PSO to Chief of the Air Staff, Assistant Chief of the Air Staff (Safety), Additional Secretary in Ministry of Defence, Air Officer Commanding PAF Academy Asghar Khan, Deputy Chief of the Air Staff (Administration) and is presently officiating as Vice Chief of the Air Staff. He has attended numerous professional as well as staff courses which include Quality Assurance Course, Flying Instructors Course, Combat Commander Course, Senior Command & Staff Course and Armed Forces War Course. He holds Master's degree in strategic studies from National Defence University. The Air Marshal is an accomplished fighter pilot, with rich flying experience on Mirage and F-16 fighter aircraft on PAF's inventory. For his meritorious services to the PAF, Air Marshal Hamid Rashid Randhawa has been awarded with Tamgha-i-Imtiaz (Military), Sitara-i-Imtiaz (Military) and Hilal-i-Imtiaz (Military).

Manoj Jain
Bharat Electronics Limited (BEL)

Mr. Manoj Jain took charge as the Chairman and Managing Director of Navratna Defence PSU Bharat Electronics Limited (BEL) on June 20, 2024. He was Director (R&D) since September 26, 2022, and was also assigned with the additional charge of Director (Bangalore Complex) from August 1, 2023.

Mr. Jain joined BEL in August 1991 as a Probationary Engineer after earning his BE in Electronics from REC Jaipur (MNIT), where he was awarded a gold medal. Over the course of his distinguished career spanning more than three decades, he has made substantial contributions to the field of Research & Development.

In his early years at BEL's Kotdwara Unit in the D&E department, Mr. Jain played a key role in the development of Digital Multiplexers, Cross Connects, CDOT Exchanges, and Military Switches. In 1999, he transitioned to BEL's Central Research Laboratory in Bangalore, where he contributed to the development of technologies for Defence Networks and Network & Bulk Security Solutions. In the field of Radar, a core business of BEL, he was involved in the development of VeXT, Scan Converter, and Display technologies using FPGA.

Mr. Jain has been honored with numerous R&D awards, Key Contributor Awards, the Raksha Mantri's Award, and the SODET Awards.

Abdulaziz Busbate
CEO for MENA Region, DHL Express

DHL Express has appointed Abdulaziz Busbate as the new CEO of DHL Express MENA (Middle East and North Africa), effective January 1, 2025 and is based in Bahrain.

Bringing 24 years of management experience at DHL Express to the role, Busbate began his journey in Saudi Arabia, leading various commercial teams and contributing significantly to the organization's profitable growth.

In 2014, Busbate transferred to Bahrain as Country Manager, where he focused on service improvement and commercial development. In 2021, he returned to Saudi Arabia as Managing Director, successfully driving forward the company's strategy, including significant enhancements to service quality, investments in infrastructure and capacity, and development of the local workforce.

Busbate reports directly to John Pearson, the CEO of DHL Express.

Dr. Samir V. Kamat
Chairman, Defence Research Development Organisation DRDO)

Dr. Samir V. Kamat is the Secretary DDR&D and Chairman Defence Research and Development Organization (DRDO). An eminent scientist and visionary leader, Dr. Kamat has been instrumental in steering the organization towards achieving self-reliance in critical defence technologies and strengthening India's position in the global defence ecosystem.

Over the years, he has made significant contributions to advanced materials development, particularly for defence applications, including armor technologies, aerospace materials, and naval systems.

His pioneering research in materials science has led to the development of indigenous technologies, which are now integral to India's defence capabilities.

Additionally, he has played a key role in establishing state-of-the-art experimental facilities and has specialized expertise in characterizing the mechanical behavior of materials in small volumes, particularly those used in MEMS.

Nadir Shafi Dar

Member CAA Board (Ex-Officio) & Director General, Pakistan Civil Aviation Authority

Mr. Nadir Shafi Dar currently serves as the Director General of the Pakistan Civil Aviation Authority (CAA) and is an Ex-officio Member of the CAA Board under Section 6(1)(c) of the Pakistan Civil Aviation Authority Act, 2023. With his extensive leadership experience and a deep understanding of the aviation sector, Mr. Dar plays a critical role in steering Pakistan's civil aviation industry toward modernization and global competitiveness.

As Director General, Mr. Dar is responsible for overseeing all aspects of civil aviation operations in Pakistan, including regulatory functions, safety oversight, infrastructure development, and fostering sustainable growth in the industry. His commitment to enhancing Pakistan's aviation infrastructure and regulatory standards has been pivotal in aligning the sector with international benchmarks, ensuring safety, and promoting efficiency.

Mr. Dar's leadership has been instrumental in strengthening collaborations with global aviation bodies, addressing challenges within the sector, and implementing reforms that position Pakistan as a key player in regional and international aviation.

Through his role on the CAA Board, he contributes to policymaking and strategic planning, ensuring the authority delivers on its mission to develop a safe, secure, and efficient aviation industry that meets the evolving needs of the country and the global market.

Md. Monjur Kabir Bhuiyan

Air Vice Marshal, Chairman, Civil Aviation Authority of Bangladesh (CAAB)

Air Vice Marshal Mohammad Monjur Kabir Bhuiyan, an accomplished officer of the Bangladesh Air Force, currently serves as the Chairman of the Civil Aviation Authority of Bangladesh (CAAB), a position he assumed on August 13, 2024.

His illustrious career, spanning over three decades since his commissioning on July 2, 1989, reflects a blend of leadership, instructional excellence, and strategic expertise.

In his military career, AVM Bhuiyan commanded BAF Base Bir Uttam Sultan Mahmud, BAF Base Zahurul Haque, and Air Headquarters (Unit). He has also held key positions such as OC Flying Wing and OC Admin Wing at three operational BAF bases. He excelled as an instructor in flying squadrons and institutions and served as a directing staff at the Defence Services Command & Staff College.

His diverse staff appointments include Director of Overseas Air Operations, Director of Cyber Warfare and IT, Pro Vice-Chancellor of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman Aviation and Aerospace University, and Commander Planning and Strategy Division at the Air Command Operation Center.

An accomplished pilot, AVM Bhuiyan has flown numerous aircraft types, including the F-18 Hornet, and commanded a Fighter Squadron and the Flying Training Wing of the BAF Academy. He also distinguished himself in UN peacekeeping missions in Haiti and Sudan, earning multiple commendations, including the prestigious Force Commander's Commendation in Sudan.

AVM Bhuiyan is married to Begum Ferdaus Nahar, a grade-A artist at Bangladesh Betar. The couple have a daughter, Anika Tasfia Kabir, pursuing a BBA at the University of Liberal Arts, Bangladesh.

M Suresh

Chairman, Airports Authority of India

M. Suresh was appointed as the Chairman (Additional charge) of Airports Authority of India (AAI) with effect from 20th August, 2024.

He has more than 33 years of rich experience in Airports Authority of India holding the posts of Member (ANS), Regional Executive Director (North East Region) and Airport Director at Goa, Jammu and Madurai Airports.

Mr. Suresh is an Air Navigation Service technical expert and has vast experience in planning, provision, operation & maintenance of CNS facilities, airport system facilities & information technology facilities in airports in India. He has been instrumental in the implementation of NOCAS Version-2, the Building Height Clearance Software for the public, SKY REV 360 (Patent Holder), NIC CPPP Training Program, e-Office deployment and the Implementation of the Biometric Access Control project in AAI and many such initiatives.

In his additional assignment as the Chairman of the Airports Authority of India, Mr. Suresh will lead efforts to achieve AAI's organizational goals of providing world-class airport infrastructure, top-of-the-line facilities and leading air navigation services in the world.

Prakash Apte

Chairman, Blue Dart Express

Prakash Apte is a renowned business leader and the Chairman of Blue Dart Express Limited. With his exceptional leadership skills and visionary approach, Apte has played an instrumental role in transforming Blue Dart into one of the most respected names in the air express logistics industry. Under his guidance, the company has continued to innovate and expand its services, contributing significantly to the growth of the Indian aviation and logistics sectors.

Prakash Apte's career spans several decades, marked by his deep knowledge and understanding of the aviation and logistics industry. Having joined Blue Dart at its early stages, Apte rose through the ranks and has been at the helm of the organization as Chairman. His leadership style is characterized by a commitment to excellence, efficiency, and customer satisfaction. Apte's innovative approach has led to the development of integrated logistics services that leverage Blue Dart's strong network, technology, and human resources.

Under Apte's leadership, Blue Dart has expanded its service offerings to include a wide range of solutions, including international express delivery, same-day services, and temperature-sensitive logistics, catering to diverse industries like pharmaceuticals, e-commerce, automotive, and more.

Apte's strategic vision led to the expansion of Blue Dart's infrastructure, including a network of state-of-the-art logistics hubs and an extensive fleet of aircraft and ground vehicles. This has played a key role in enhancing the company's capability to handle the growing demand for express logistics in India.

Abu Sayeed Mehboob Khan

Air Commodore, BSP, BUP, NDC, PSC – Member (Operations & Planning), Civil Aviation Authority of Bangladesh (CAAB)

Air Commodore Abu Sayeed Mehboob Khan serves as the Member for Operations & Planning at the Civil Aviation Authority of Bangladesh (CAAB), a key role overseeing the smooth functioning and strategic planning of aviation operations in Bangladesh. With years of experience in both military and civil aviation, he plays a crucial part in shaping policies, ensuring air traffic safety, and optimizing airport operations.

He holds an exceptional track record of professional accomplishments and awards, including the Bangladesh Swadhinata Padak (BSP) and Bangladesh Udyog Padak (BUP), in recognition of his distinguished service. Air Commodore Khan is also a graduate of the National Defence College (NDC), further strengthening his credentials in defense and aviation sectors.

His responsibilities at CAAB involve strategic planning for air traffic management, safety measures, and enhancing operational efficiency across Bangladesh's aviation infrastructure. He is instrumental in managing the coordination between domestic and international air travel, ensuring safety standards, and fostering regulatory compliance. Known for his leadership and commitment to enhancing aviation safety and service quality, Air Commodore Khan continues to drive the modernization and development of Bangladesh's aviation sector with a focus on long-term growth and sustainability.

Nikhil Joshi

Managing Director, Boeing Defence India

Nikhil Joshi is the Managing Director of Boeing Defence India (BDI), a role in which he oversees the company's strategic operations, growth, and partnerships within the Indian defense and aerospace sectors.

Based in New Delhi, Joshi leads current and future programs for BDI to enhance the mission readiness and modernization of India's defence forces. With over two decades of experience in the aviation and defense industries, Nikhil has been a key player in driving Boeing's strategic initiatives in India, focusing on strengthening relationships with government agencies, military forces, and key stakeholders in the region.

Under his leadership, Boeing Defence India has made significant strides in expanding its footprint in the Indian defense industry. Nikhil played an instrumental role in securing major defense contracts, particularly in the areas of fighter aircraft, helicopters, surveillance systems, and unmanned aerial vehicles (UAVs). His efforts have resulted in Boeing becoming a trusted partner of the Indian Armed Forces, providing cutting-edge defense solutions that enhance India's strategic capabilities.

Nikhil has also been instrumental in expanding Boeing's international collaborations, working with defense partners across Asia and the Middle East. His efforts have led to Boeing securing key defense contracts and collaborations with foreign military entities, further establishing the company as a leader in the global defense market.

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Advanced Air Mobility, The Future is Almost Here

Sensing the momentum behind passenger advanced air mobility, more investors are now directing more funds to the sector, according to strategy and management consulting firm McKinsey and Company which predicts that, in our lifetimes, we will likely see new forms of air transport emerging.

By R. Chandrakanth

Even as several nations are rapidly innovating on electric vertical take-off and landing (eVTOL) aircraft technologies and simultaneously working on regulatory aspects, China may beat them all by becoming the first country in the world with flying taxis as part of Beijing's plan to develop what it calls the 'low-altitude economy'.

In late 2023, China's EHang became the first global AAM manufacturer to receive a type certificate for its EH216-S uncrewed eVTOL aircraft from the Civil Aviation Administration of China (CAAC). So far, China is the only country to have issued an AAM type certificate.

At the recent China Central Economic Work Conference, the talk was all about 'low-altitude economy' with the country designating the project as a 'strategic emerging industry'. Beijing is looking at airspace below 1,000 meters for AAMs.

China is in pole position as its technology capital Shenzhen is already witness to food deliveries by drone and helicopter taxi services, the latter, of course, exists in some parts of the world.

In India's tech capital – Bengaluru which is notorious for crazy road traffic, helitaxis are operating from one part of the city to the Kempegowda International Airport. One thing is clear, Urban Air Mobility is one of the answers to traffic chaos.

"We've spent the last hundred years trying to take aviation out of cities, largely, and now we're bringing them back into the city environment," said Ryan Coates, the Executive Director of Remotely Piloted Aircraft Systems of AAM Transport Canada, at the third edition of Honeywell's Advanced Air Mobility Summit.

Bringing it back in the city skies is going to be one of the most critical challenges, to be dealt with from the angles of safety, sustainability and viability, and it's not going to be an easy task.

'Innovate 28', US on Track

Efforts are on across the globe. The United States Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) has an implementation plan 'Innovate28', designed to enable AAM operations at scale by 2028 and in time for the Los Angeles Olympics. The European Union, Japan, Germany, France, Brazil, United Arab Emirates etc are in different stages of AAM maturity.

In July 2024, at the Paris Olympics, Volocopter was to have trial flights of its electric air taxi from a floating platform on the River Seine. But that was not to be. The issue was certification delays.

However, VoloCity managed to kick off the eVTOL (electric vertical take-off and landing) operational validation phase at a bespoke commercial vertiport at the Aerodrome of Saint-Cyr-l'École. This signalled the start of pre-commercial test series designed to validate the advanced air mobility technologies.

Regulations: Work in Progress

Meanwhile, in the US the FAA has given permission to Santa Clara-based electric air taxi company Archer to operate its 'Midnight' eVTOL aircraft commercially ahead of an official public launch possibly in Newark or Chicago, which the company said could be as early as 2025.

The FAA has released its final Special Federal Aviation Regulation (SFAR) on powered-lift pilot certification and operation. The powered-lift category of aircraft includes electric vertical take-off and landing (eVTOL) aircraft or air taxis.

The FAA considers eVTOL as powered-lift – not airplanes or helicopters. Aside from airman qualification regulations in Part 61, there are very few regulations for powered-lift operations.

The FAA has issued a rule for the qualifications and training that instructors and pilots must have to fly aircraft in this "powered-lift" category, which have characteristics of both airplanes and helicopters. The rule addresses their operational requirements, including minimum safe altitudes and required visibility. The rule is the final piece in the puzzle for safely introducing these aircraft in the near term.

"The FAA will continue to prioritize the safety of our system as we work to seamlessly integrate innovative technology and operations. This final rule provides the necessary framework to allow powered lift aircraft to safely operate in our airspace," said FAA Administrator Mike Whitaker. "Powered lift aircraft are the first new category of aircraft in nearly 80 years and this historic rule will pave the way for accommodating wide-scale AAM operations in the future."

Deloitte's Advanced Air Mobility Survey has forecast that the AAM market for passenger and cargo mobility in the U.S. is estimated to reach $115 billion annually by 2035 and account for over 280,000 jobs. Indeed, humongous potential but the new era in aviation will take some time for mass commercialization.

Corridors for AAM Traffic?

The National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA) has proposed the use of "corridors" to segregate AAM traffic – especially automated traffic – but this concept is not fully fleshed out and presents its own challenges.

So, it's all about putting robust and dynamic regulations in place and it is happening in various countries. And as recent as early November, Brazil's National Civil Aviation Agency published the final version of airworthiness criteria for eVTOL of Eve Air Mobility, an innovation project of Embraer, one of the largest aircraft manufacturers in the world. This is a critical stage of the type certification process.

"The publication of the final airworthiness criteria marks an important step towards the certification of our eVTOL. The feedback received during the public consultation phase was invaluable in refining these criteria. We are now looking forward to continue working closely with ANAC on Type Certification (TC) and the FAA on the simultaneous validation of the ANAC TC," said Luiz Valentini, chief technology officer of Eve.

The NASA Aeronautics Project is also doing extensive research on AAM, primarily enabling remotely piloted aircraft to identify, monitor and suppress wildfires 24 hours a day; how to safely integrate emerging electric air taxi technologies into cities and the National Airspace System; air traffic management system to safely accommodate the growing demand of new air vehicles to enter the airspace to perform a variety of missions; and to develop critical technologies that enable revolutionary new air travel options, such as large cargo-carrying vehicles and passenger-carrying air taxis.

These are just few examples of AAM projects underway and how certification agencies are delving deep into different aspects of commercial operations of the future urban air transportation that will include low-altitude passenger transport, cargo delivery and public service capabilities.

As the industry grows, and especially as aircraft grow more and more automated until eventually being fully autonomous, airspace procedures must be developed to ensure safe integration with manned aircraft.

World Economic Forum introduces AVIATE

With such tectonic shift happening in the skies, the World Economic Forum has AVIATE (Advanced Air Mobility Initiative) in place, with a commitment to the safe, sustainable and equitable integration of advanced air mobility and autonomous aviation technologies into the global airspace. The writing is in the sky – safe, sustainable and equitable integration of AAM.

As the application opportunities are manifold across passenger and non-passenger transport clusters, the White Paper identifies three categories of enablers – social acceptance, operational feasibility and financial viability. For the development of passenger-related use cases, social acceptance is most crucial.

Non-passenger applications will thrive through financial viability best achieved by increased levels of automation, the WEF said in its 'White Paper'. AAM adoption is expected to benefit various industries (e.g. healthcare: high speed, better coverage and accessibility); different geographies (e.g. remote areas: better accessibility and lower risk in dangerous surroundings); and people (e.g. (sub)urban transit: faster, increased convenience and more pedestrian space).

While technologies are fast evolving in this realm, formulation of regulations seems to be the biggest concern – how to integrate in the air space that is going to see increased air traffic movement with the regular scheduled and non-scheduled air operators; more drones and then the AAMs.

"Meaningful public involvement and engagement around advanced air mobility will be critical for this new sector," Christopher Coes, Acting Undersecretary for Policy at the U.S. Department of Transportation, said at the Honeywell AAM Summit. "We need to make sure that we have robust processes in place to engage communities large and small, rural, suburban or urban, so they can have a say in the services that are operated there."

Safety remains of paramount importance even as the proponents of AAM show huge economic potential. Deloitte's Advanced Air Mobility Survey has forecast that the AAM market for passenger and cargo mobility in the U.S. is estimated to reach $115 billion annually by 2035 and account for over 280,000 jobs. Indeed, humongous potential but the new era in aviation will take some time for mass commercialization.

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The Future of MRO: What's Next?

MRO is evolving to meet the demands of modern aircraft and the changing times. Find out more how industry leaders are discussing their commitment to sustainability, efficiency, and regulatory compliance in an ever-changing landscape.

By Ayesha Rashid

The development of commercial jet airliners in the 1950s and 1960s marked a significant turning point in the history of MRO (Maintenance, Repair and Overhaul).

As air travel became more accessible and widespread, the demand for reliable and efficient MRO services grew exponentially.

The early days of aviation saw MRO as a rudimentary function, with maintenance tasks performed by pilots and mechanics themselves.

As the industry grew, so did the complexity of aircraft systems, leading to the emergence of specialized MRO providers.

Throughout the 20th century, MRO evolved to keep pace with advances in technology, materials and design.

Today, MRO truly serves as the backbone of aviation, delivering the critical support needed to keep aircraft in top shape, ready to take off and fly safely.

The global aircraft engine MRO market size was valued at USD 37.56 billion in 2022 and is projected to grow from USD 42.81 billion in 2023 to USD 59.01 billion by 2030, exhibiting a CAGR of 4.69% during the forecast period.

North America dominated the global aircraft engine MRO industry with a market share of 32.91% in 2022 (Fortune Business Insights).

Due to long flight hours, certain wear and tear of the aircraft engine is inevitable. To maintain and repair the damages, maintenance, repair and overhaul are done at specialized institutions and locations around the world to maintain the airworthiness of the aircraft flying across the globe.

The market is predicted to gain traction over the forecast period owing to growth in air travel and passenger traffic and expansion in the global aircraft fleet that subsequently led to a rise in global aircraft deliveries.

In this exclusive feature, **Aviation Guide** speaks with three influential leaders who are driving advancements in aviation maintenance: **Alex Youngs**, VP of Marketing for Airlines and Fleets at Standard Aero; **Kevin Kirkpatrick**, VP of Aftermarket Global Operations at Pratt & Whitney; and **Andy Wheeler**, Divisional VP and Managing Director at AEM Ametek MRO.

Together, they share valuable insights into the latest trends, innovations, and challenges in the MRO space.

Their perspectives shed light on how they are fostering safer, smarter, and more efficient solutions that keep aircraft operating seamlessly around the world.

Optimizing MRO for Safety, Efficiency and Quality

Inefficient MRO leads to delays, cancellations, and unplanned maintenance, affecting revenue, customer trust, and productivity.

Streamlined MRO protocols reduce downtime, cut costs, and minimize delays, allowing airlines to deliver better customer experiences, boost brand loyalty, and ensure compliance with regulations.

Alex Youngs of StandardAero explains, "At StandardAero, operational excellence is at the core of everything we do. We foster a strong culture of continuous improvement, with dozens of employee-led teams actively working on improvement projects. These efforts are celebrated through our quarterly and annual True Blue Continuous Improvement Awards, which include financial incentives.

Alex Youngs

"Our facilities are designed with standardized workflows to enhance process quality, turnaround times, and delivery performance. Every day, we coordinate our activities through an integrated sales, inventory, and operations planning (SIOP) process that emphasizes accurate forecasting and material planning to provide a seamless customer experience. Additionally, we're committed to high standards, holding ISO 9001:2000, AS9100/AS9110 quality certifications, and ISO 14001:2015 for environmental management."

Pratt & Whitney's Kevin Kirkpatrick described RTX CORE as the company's foundation for operational excellence and customer satisfaction.

"RTX CORE, which stands for Customer Oriented Results and Excellence, is our next-generation operating system that defines how we conduct business across RTX and Pratt & Whitney," he explained.

"It gives us a common language, toolset, and methodology to achieve excellence, eliminate waste, reduce variation, and drive continuous improvement."

Kirkpatrick highlighted Pratt & Whitney's commitment to modernization through Industry 4.0 technologies across its global manufacturing footprint.

"Our strategy is twofold," he continued. "First, we're advancing MRO processes through robotics, connected factories, and shop digital twin innovations, which allow us to accelerate turnaround times while maintaining the highest quality and safety standards. Second, we focus on material restoration using advanced technology, like additive repairs and digital inspection, to enhance our parts' durability through adaptive processing, automation, and precision coatings."

Kevin Kirkpatrick

This dual approach, he noted, ensures that Pratt & Whitney remains a leader in operational efficiency and customer-focused results.

Andy Wheeler, Divisional Vice President & Managing Director of AEM/AMETEK MRO, shared how AEM is committed to maximizing operational performance and quality through a range of strategic methods.

"At AEM, we focus on inventory optimization and process standardization, ensuring that our operations run smoothly and efficiently," Wheeler explained. "We rely on cross-functional collaboration and continuous improvement to keep our processes sharp and effective."

Andy Wheeler

Wheeler emphasized the role of AEM's fully integrated ERP business solution, specifically designed for the aviation industry.

"Our ERP system is tailored to enforce compliance with best practices and workflows, which means we can deliver consistent quality and optimize every step of our operations," he noted.

The Role of Technology in MRO Operations

Many aviation organizations are harnessing technology to enhance their Maintenance, Repair, and Overhaul (MRO) processes, resulting in notable gains in efficiency and productivity.

Here's how:

- **Streamlined Operations: Automation of manual tasks reduces paperwork and simplifies data analysis, transforming MRO management.**
- **Proactive Maintenance: Advanced software solutions like predictive analytics and AI help identify potential issues early, minimizing downtime and boosting fleet availability.**
- **Enhanced Collaboration: Real-time communication tools enable seamless coordination between maintenance teams, suppliers, and operators, ensuring everyone is aligned.**
- **Optimized Resource Management: Technology integration allows for better resource allocation, cost reduction, and improved customer satisfaction through informed decision-making.**
- **Increased Transparency: With greater visibility into operations, organizations can quickly spot areas for improvement, leading to fewer maintenance errors and enhanced safety.**

Wheeler noted, "Technology is crucial in MRO operations. At AEM, we leverage electronic workforce management and security systems to enhance our cost-effectiveness, efficiency, and safety."

Kirkpatrick shared, "Our investments in CORE and our Operational Excellence (OpX) strategy—such as connected factory initiatives, automation, and improved process controls—have significantly enhanced the effectiveness of our manufacturing operations and improved the employee experience. This has led to reduced variation and waste in our product production.

In our MRO facilities, we're also introducing new technologies and equipment. By implementing the OpX Playbook, we're achieving higher levels of process capability optimized with lean principles. We're automating where it makes sense and creating a connected environment that collects data, runs analytics, and provides real-time information to both operators and leaders—eliminating the need for Excel and PowerPoint."

Youngs emphasized, "Technology is crucial in maximizing MRO efficiency, particularly in developing repair schemes for new materials found in the latest generation of engines, such as advanced composites and ceramics. Without these innovative repair techniques—including cold metals transfer (CMT) repairs and adaptive blending—many parts would need to be discarded during maintenance, which is not only financially undesirable but also harmful to the environment."

Moreover, Youngs pointed out that digitalization of records and processes, augmented reality systems like head-mounted displays, and the increasing use of digital twins are transforming MRO operations.

"Finally, we must also recognize the impact of technology on our logistics chain. Computerized inventory management systems and RFID tagging are streamlining workflows and optimizing procurement activities, ensuring our operations run as efficiently as possible."

Recent MRO Technological Advancements

For StandardAero, the recent establishment of a full maintenance, repair, and overhaul line in San Antonio, TX, for the CFM International LEAP-1A and LEAP-1B engines marks a significant advancement following their appointment as a CFM Branded Service Agreement (CBSA) service provider.

This development has introduced a range of technological innovations, including augmented reality systems with head-mounted displays for shop technicians.

Additionally, advanced repair schemes have been industrialized through the new Repair & Development Center of Excellence, along with upgrades to the state-of-the-art test facilities at the San Antonio test complex.

Kirkpatrick highlighted Pratt & Whitney's commitment to enhancing operational effectiveness through key technological initiatives, including product-specific digital twins and the digital thread connecting data across ERP, PLM, and MES platforms.

Here are some notable advancements:

- **Percept Launch:** This advanced AI-based aircraft engine analysis tool leverages computer vision to allow users to capture images and videos of engines using mobile devices, receiving real-time responses on parts availability. "Percept automates inspections, reducing inspection time by nearly 90%," Kirkpatrick explained.
- **Collaborative Robot (Cobot):** Developed at the Singapore engine center, this cobot assists technicians by documenting hundreds of images at various engine locations upon arrival and departure. "This system replaces routine photo documentation, saving time and enhancing technician skills," Kirkpatrick noted.
- **Smart Glasses:** "Wearable technologies with integrated cameras and screens enable

hands-free communication, which is valuable for training, troubleshooting, and equipment qualification," Kirkpatrick stated.

- 3D Printing Deployment: In 2023, Pratt & Whitney successfully introduced the first application of 3D printing for aero-engine components and pioneered robotics in MRO with an automated system to replace manual fixtures for tube repair.
- Industrial Simulation Pilot: This initiative creates a Digital Twin of the factory, analyzing product movement, process steps, and inventory. "The pilot at Pratt & Whitney Component Solutions in Singapore optimized floor space and increased productivity," Kirkpatrick said.

Current MRO Trends

Youngs remarked on the robust demand for all engine lines at StandardAero, stating, "We are continuing to add capacity, particularly for the CFM56-7B at DFW International Airport, as well as the LEAP-1A and LEAP-1B at our San Antonio facility."

Kirkpatrick highlighted Pratt & Whitney's commitment to automation and sustainability across its MRO sites, noting, "We are seeing strong industry trends aimed at improving productivity and lowering costs while reducing our environmental footprint."

He emphasized that the company is integrating technology and reimagining operations to pursue greener practices, with specific goals set for each facility to mitigate usage and emissions.

Key initiatives include water consumption projects, the use of solar fields, and reducing industrial waste. Notably, he mentioned that in 2023, the Arkansas facility achieved 100% of its energy from renewable sources.

Kirkpatrick also discussed the multi-year technology insertion plan aimed at enhancing operational efficiency and preparing for Industry 4.0.

He cited a success story from the Eagle Services Asia facility, where Alfred, a robot designed to assemble the high-pressure GTF compressor rotor, has cut build time by 50%. "We are scaling and expanding this automation

advancement across Pratt & Whitney's global MRO footprint in collaboration with our Singapore Technology Accelerator," he added.

Wheeler noted the growing emphasis on sustainability and green initiatives in response to increasing environmental regulations.

He stated that AEM's team conducted extensive research on effective solutions for managing and treating hazardous waste at their machining and plating facility in the United Kingdom.

"The conclusion was clear: investing in a wastewater recycling process would be the best long-term solution," he explained.

This initiative has successfully reduced hazardous waste by 192 tons, and the facility now recycles over 47,000 gallons of water annually.

Integrating New Technologies into Existing Workflows

Youngs shared how they minimize disruptions when introducing new technologies in MRO operations.

"We use two key strategies to ensure a smooth transition," he said.

"First, we conduct extensive 'back-office' testing before integrating new technologies into an active MRO line. Second, we focus the initial rollout on non-customer engines, such as rental engines from our own pool, those undergoing maintenance, or engines being repaired for our asset management divisions, like PTS Aviation or our Engine Trading team. This approach not only prevents delays for customer engines but also allows us to evaluate the effectiveness of the new technology before full-scale implementation."

Wheeler explained that AEM follows a structured capability development procedure.

"Cross-functional teams collaborate to assess workload and formulate a clear implementation strategy," he noted.

"Involving all key stakeholders across the company ensures that we maximize efficiency in both planning and execution."

Kirkpatrick highlighted the establishment of two technology accelerators to drive innovation and implementation of the latest technologies.

"Last year, we launched the Singapore Technology Accelerator, aimed at enhancing MRO performance and efficiency on the shop floor," he noted. This initiative focuses on technologies such as data analytics, robotics, advanced inspection, connected factory systems, and digital twins."

Earlier this year, the North America Technology Accelerator was introduced as a second center of excellence dedicated to advancing MRO technologies.

"This accelerator will concentrate on material restoration and process automation, including advanced repairs, digital inspection, adaptive processing, and coating and masking for various components like compressor and fan parts," Kirkpatrick added.

He also emphasized the importance of integrating technological changes into training methods: "We ensure our employees' skill sets evolve ahead of technology implementation, allowing us to uphold high quality standards and meet our delivery commitments."

Challenges Facing the MRO Sector

Kirkpatrick discussed the ongoing challenges and progress within the supply chain, noting,

"While we continue to see improvements that contribute to year-over-year growth, industry-wide supply chain pressures still impact material availability and MRO throughput."

He highlighted the need to balance increasing production rates with higher fleet utilization as the supply base recovers.

To enhance supply chain output, Pratt & Whitney has implemented several strategies, including embedding staff with key suppliers to expedite parts delivery, qualifying additional suppliers for critical programs, and providing training assistance to suppliers' employees.

"We are also focused on expanding our capacity and capabilities while integrating advanced technologies across our GTF MRO network to meet the rising demand for the growing GTF fleet," he added.

Kirkpatrick emphasized the commitment to enhancing the global GTF MRO footprint, stating, "We are investing in our own shops, hiring hundreds of employees, and incorporating industry-leading providers into the GTF MRO network."

According to him, with 18 active sites globally, there are plans to open an additional shop by 2025, bringing the total to 19.

Wheeler highlighted one of the biggest challenges faced: "Parts availability remains a significant issue."

To tackle this, AEM collaborates closely with its supplier network and OEMs, ensuring a robust supply chain.

Additionally, the company leverages data analytics to enhance inventory management, using forecasting to anticipate demand and optimize stock levels effectively.

Youngs stated, "We are still facing long lead times on certain parts, impacting turnaround times across several platforms. While delays are typical for older legacy systems, the post-COVID supply chain issues have led to unexpected extended lead times on some popular engine products that are still in production. This situation has forced the MRO industry to compete with OEMs' new build production lines for certain components."

He noted that AEM's extensive in-house component repair capabilities help mitigate the effects of parts shortages, as do the used serviceable material (USM) sourcing options provided by their in-house asset management subsidiary, PTS Aviation.

"We strive to assist customers in anticipating their shop visit needs as early as possible. Additionally, we've launched our ProPass accelerated induction program across our PW100, PT6A, and JT15D lines to help minimize engine downtime."

Commitment to Safety and Compliance

Safety is the top priority at StandardAero, which is why the company operates exclusively as an OEM-authorized facility.

This designation ensures the highest quality in MRO services through regular audits, mandatory OEM training, and stringent quality standards for practices and material sourcing.

The organization closely monitors safety statistics and quality metrics daily using operational dashboards, which are accessible to senior leadership.

The company also encourages proactive identification and resolution of potential issues through its 'Stop for Safety' program, which recognizes and rewards employees for their actions in enhancing safety.

AEM fully complies with CAA, EASA, and FAA regulations to uphold high safety standards.

The company undergoes regular inspections and audits to ensure adherence to these regulations, while its skilled workforce participates in continuous training programs.

AEM employs a safety management system that adopts a systematic and proactive approach to risk management.

Staff members follow established standard operating practices for all tasks, utilizing safety management strategies to identify and log hazards on a risk register, along with implementing preventative actions.

Pratt & Whitney employs a cross-enterprise Production Approval Process for component and engine maintenance, ensuring safety and reliability through 19 control elements, from initial site readiness to certification and delivery.

Key measures include:

- Regulatory Compliance Audits are conducted for the business, overhaul network members, and suppliers.
- Monthly Performance Monitoring includes internal and external audits, along with risk assessments.
- Annual Surveys and business partner risk assessments are carried out to evaluate compliance.
- Knowledge Sharing practices ensure that lessons learned are communicated across the organization.
- A comprehensive Onboarding Process is established for new employees to ensure familiarity with safety protocols.
- Quality Alerts are issued for critical safety issues to maintain awareness and responsiveness.
- Critical Supplier Reviews involve annual audits, with the possibility of removing suppliers from the approved list if they fail to meet established standards.

Evolving MRO Focus and Future Plans

As engine technology evolves, the aviation industry is making strides

toward achieving net-zero carbon emissions by 2050.

Kirkpatrick noted that this shift requires maintenance personnel to upskill in automation and digitization.

Pratt & Whitney has adapted its services to meet the growing complexity of modern aircraft, employing advanced restoration techniques like additive manufacturing and automated repairs for high-temperature composites.

Data analytics plays a crucial role in enhancing MRO operations. With improvements in wireless technology, airlines can access detailed flight data remotely.

“This capability allows us to identify trends and generate alerts for more informed inspection recommendations,” Kirkpatrick explained.

Ongoing investments in capturing product-related data throughout its lifecycle have advanced Pratt & Whitney's engine health management capabilities.

The company is also focusing on product-specific Digital Twins and seamless data flow, improving maintenance visibility and optimization.

Through its EngineWise® Data by ADEM™ service, Pratt & Whitney helps customers effectively manage engine health and maintenance planning.

“These improvements have cut turnaround times from weeks to hours,”Kirkpatrick added.

Looking ahead, Pratt & Whitney aims to expand its global GTF MRO capacity to meet rising aftermarket demands, with plans to open a new shop by 2025.

“We're sharing best practices and driving innovation through automation and advanced inspections,” he concluded, emphasizing the alignment with the company's long-term vision.

StandardAero has traditionally concentrated on mature engine platforms but made a significant shift in 2023 by securing CBSA approval for the CFM International LEAP-1A and LEAP-1B engines, which are at the start of their 40-50-year service life.

"We've quickly established full MRO capabilities at our San Antonio, TX facility to support the global LEAP operator community," Youngs said.

“This includes engine testing and a dedicated Training Academy to equip technicians with the skills needed for the new materials and repairs associated with the LEAP engines. Additionally, a Repair & Development Center of Excellence has been set up in Cincinnati, OH, to develop and industrialize necessary repairs.

Like Pratt & Whitney, for Standard Aero, data analytics also plays a crucial role in StandardAero's MRO operations.

“Analyzing engine records before induction is crucial for understanding an engine's history and workscoping needs.”

Youngs mentioned that "we expect artificial intelligence to enhance this process soon." The company leverages data analytics to monitor operational, financial, environmental, and safety metrics.

He added that "dashboards are vital in our SIOP process," emphasizing their importance for both facility and back-office teams.

Additionally, a dedicated data analysis team in Gonesse, France, supports engine health monitoring across 19 platforms to proactively identify potential issues before they lead to an AOG event.

Looking ahead, StandardAero plans to integrate new technologies to streamline processes and expand service offerings.

Youngs mentioned their collaboration with Boom Supersonic on the Symphony engine for the Boom Overture supersonic airliner, stating, "Our ability to support broader customer requirements is highlighted by our role in the assembly, integration, and testing of the Symphony powerplant." The company is also committed to its Net Zero 2050 goals, aiming for a 45% reduction in direct greenhouse gas emissions by 2030 through its GreenERmro initiative.

AEM says it is dedicated to working closely with its key customers to enhance capabilities that fit their specific needs. One of the current projects is focused on the repair and overhaul of Boeing 737 MAX landing gear. Although the first major overhauls aren't scheduled for a few years, AEM has already successfully repaired some nose landing gear.

"At our windings facility, we specialize in producing electro-mechanical assemblies for aircraft generators and drive motors," Wheeler shared, highlighting the growing demand for high-performance motors and energy storage devices in aviation, motorsport, and heavy industry. This reflects a global push toward improving energy efficiency and moving away from combustion engines.

To support this shift, AEM has expanded its manufacturing capabilities to create larger and more complex assemblies that utilize litz wire.

This advanced wire technology improves efficiency by reducing losses in high-frequency motors, making it a key player in the market.

When it comes to data analytics, Wheeler explained, "We use data analytics for analyzing our pricing and cost structures, which helps with budgeting and planning."

The company also employs analytics to enhance inventory management, forecasting demand, and optimizing stock levels.

Looking ahead, AEM is making significant investments in its machining and plating operations at its Ramsgate plant in the UK.

This facility will not only support the landing gear MRO business but also provide services to third parties.

"These developments are crucial for our growth and commitment to innovation," Wheeler emphasized.

Overall, AEM's commitment to advanced technologies, effective use of data analytics, and strategic investments positions it as a leader in the aviation MRO landscape.

The company is well-prepared to tackle future challenges while supporting the industry's transition to greener solutions.

Armel Jezequel

The Skills Gap in Aviation: Insights from Industry Leaders

The aviation industry requires skilled professionals, and institutions such as Aircraft Academy and the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO) train and provide resources to empower students to succeed. Aircraft Academy CEO Armel Jezequel and ICAO Training Chief Laura Camastra share their perspectives on current aviation training trends and strategies to address challenges in the industry.

By Ayesha Rashid

Besides the growing demand for air travel, several factors contribute to the need for skilled aviation professionals. The retirement of baby boomers, advancements in technology and increasing regulatory requirements all play a role in creating a gap in the skills in the industry.

As a result, airlines, airports and other aviation organizations are struggling to find qualified candidates to fill critical roles.

Stepping into the world of aviation isn't just about training to become a pilot or an engineer; it's about joining a global network driven by precision, teamwork and top-tier expertise.

But what does it truly take to stand out in this high-stakes industry?

Skilled professionals are the backbone of the aviation industry, and institutions like Aircraft Academy and ICAO are committed to providing students with the training and resources needed to excel in their careers.

We had the opportunity to speak with the experts from Aircraft Academy and ICAO, **Armel Jezequel, CEO of Aircraft Academy**, Vallair Group Company and **Laura Camastra, Chief of ICAO Training**, who shared their insights on the current state of aviation training and the role that their institutions play in shaping the next generation of aviation professionals.

In this article, we'll explore their perspectives on the challenges facing the industry and the strategies they're using to address them.

From pioneering training methods to essential skills for success, they shared the latest in what makes a competitive edge in this dynamic field.

The Expanding Market for Aviation Experts

The Global Pilot Training Market Size was valued at USD 8.5 Billion in 2023 and the Worldwide Pilot Training Market Size is Expected to reach USD 20.8 Billion by 2033, according to a research report published by Spherical Insights & Consulting.

The pilot training market is expanding rapidly, driven by an increase in demand for commercial pilots as the aviation sector expands and air travel grows.

Advanced training technologies, including virtual reality (VR) and artificial intelligence (AI), are transforming pilot education, boosting simulation experiences, and raising safety requirements.

The global aviation maintenance training market revenue was valued at USD 4.32 billion in 2023. It is expected to reach USD 7.23 billion in 2032, growing at a CAGR of 5.9% over the forecast period (2024-32) (Straits Research).

The global commercial and military aircraft fleet is expanding due to rising air travel demand and defense expenditures.

As airlines and military organizations acquire more aircraft, the need for maintenance and, consequently, maintenance training increases.

Laura Camastra

Aircraft Academy's Approach to EASA Part-147 Training

The Aircraft Academy EASA Part-147 approved course is designed for aircraft maintenance engineers seeking to meet the standard of knowledge required to perform the duties of a B1/B2 certifying engineer, and to apply for appropriate company approvals.

The course content is to the level defined in the latest EASA PART 66 Regulations.

"At Aircraft Academy, we prioritize quality over quantity in our training approach," shares Armel Jezequel, CEO of Aircraft Academy. "This commitment attracts discerning students at all levels—those truly dedicated to excelling in EASA Part-147 Maintenance Training."

As part of the Vallair Group, Aircraft Academy provides top-tier theoretical and practical guidance for individuals, MROs, and airlines alike.

With a focus on upgrading skills and broadening qualifications, the academy offers courses designed specifically for professionals in need of EASA Part-66 certification enhancement.

"Our training is tailored to help each candidate achieve their unique goals, with programs that are rigorous and

highly customizable," Jezequel explains.

Situated alongside Vallair's EASA Part-145 Approved Maintenance facilities in Châteauroux and Montpellier, the academy offers hands-on experience in a fully operational maintenance environment.

Students train under the guidance of expert mechanics and technicians willing to share their insights.

"Having a real-world maintenance facility as our classroom is invaluable," says Jezequel. "It provides our students with the practical skills and confidence they need to succeed."

Tech Integration for Modern Aviation

After recognizing the significance of staying ahead of the curve in aviation training, the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO) has been at the forefront of embracing technological advancements to enhance the learning experience.

By integrating cutting-edge technologies into their training programs, ICAO aims to equip the next generation of aviation professionals with the skills and knowledge necessary to tackle the challenges of modern aviation.

"ICAO Training is harnessing emerging technologies to create immersive, hands-on learning environments," shares Laura Camastra, Chief of ICAO Training.

"By integrating AI, VR, AR, and XR, we're meeting the evolving demands of the aviation sector and enhancing the way professionals acquire essential skills."

The Digital Learning and Technology (DLT) Program is a prime example of this integration, offering courses like Airworthiness Approvals for Changing Aircraft Cabin Interiors, which now include web-based VR elements.

“Through VR, learners can experience real-world scenarios without ever leaving their home base,” Camastra notes. “It's a shift from traditional methods to an engaging, interactive approach."

Looking ahead, ICAO plans to expand its mobile-based VR and AR training offerings, ensuring accessibility and flexibility for trainees.

AI is also central to ICAO's training innovation, creating AI-generated content like multilingual audio, video, and interactive AI avatars.

"Our goal is to make learning as effective and engaging as possible," explains Camastra. "With AI and our LMS, we're creating a truly personalized learning experience."

These technological advancements are part of ICAO's broader commitment to digital transformation, designed to equip aviation professionals with practical skills in an adaptive, tech-enhanced learning environment.

"By driving digital innovation, we're helping build a skilled aviation workforce for the future," Camastra said.

Cross-Border Collaboration and Skill Development

ICAO Training is dedicated to advancing global standards and fostering collaboration across the aviation industry.

Working in close partnership with ICAO's Technical Bureaus, such as the Air Navigation and Air Transport Bureaus, ICAO Training develops courses that align with the latest Standards and Recommended Practices (SARPs) to ensure compliance and relevance.

This partnership strengthens the programs with a competency-based approach and continuous updates.

“Our courses are meticulously designed to reflect current ICAO provisions and to meet the evolving needs of aviation professionals,” explains Camastra.

Feedback plays a critical role in ICAO's training model, with insights from both instructors and participants gathered through evaluation mechanisms.

This commitment to quality means that each course is reviewed and updated at least every three years.

"Maintaining up-to-date courses is essential," says Camastra. “Because it ensures our training remains aligned with both new and amended SARPs, making it as impactful as possible.”

ICAO also facilitates cross-border collaboration through its Trainair Plus Program (TPP), which connects international organizations, academia, and industry stakeholders in a standardized training system.

“The TPP enables global partners to contribute operational expertise and participate in course development alongside ICAO and other training centers,” Camastra notes.

“This collaborative model not only strengthens public and private sector relationships across borders but also bolsters the global aviation training ecosystem.”

Aviation employers seeking practical experience and industry-recognized qualifications for their engineers turn to Aircraft Academy for training that truly speaks to their needs.

“We understand the language of the industry and are committed to delivering hands-on training that matches the demands of today's MRO sector,” shares Jezequel.

Through a partnership with Vallair Group, Aircraft Academy offers Structured On-the-Job Training (SOJT), led by experienced engineers in a thriving, modern hangar setting.

Aircraft Academy's approach combines practical on-site training with theoretical and e-learning components, equipping technicians with the full range of skills required in the Maintenance, Repair, and Overhaul (MRO) environment.

“Our goal is to provide flexible, relevant, and cutting-edge maintenance training solutions,” Jezequel explains.

“This allows us to train top-tier Licensed Aircraft Maintenance Engineers in one place, saving valuable time and costs that would otherwise be spent training at multiple locations.”

One of the standout benefits of choosing an EASA Part-145-approved facility for ongoing training is the access to real work, in real time, with industry professionals.

“Working in a live maintenance environment is transformative,” Jezequel emphasizes. “It's an

experience that propels students forward, creating a fast-track to career success in the MRO industry.”

By aligning with Vallair's EASA Part-145 facilities, Aircraft Academy provides a training environment that blends immediate industry relevance with a focus on long-term career advancement, setting up engineers for a competitive edge in their field.

Also, all Part-147 mandatory materials are updated on a continuous basis.

There are cost implications every time a change is introduced, but compliance with regulations is essential in the aviation industry.

New documentation, new tasks, new technological advancements for aircraft and engines are all covered.

Soft Skills Development

ICAO Training places a strong emphasis on developing soft skills, such as leadership, communication and teamwork, alongside technical expertise to ensure well-rounded professional growth.

"In aviation, technical skills are crucial, but it's the soft skills that often make the difference in effective collaboration and leadership," explains Camastra.

To address this need, ICAO launched the Essential Soft Skills for NextGen Aviation Professionals Hybrid Training Program.

This program starts with a self-paced online course covering key areas like communication, time management, and teamwork—skills foundational to aviation roles.

"We designed this course to offer flexibility while focusing on the essentials that every aviation professional needs," Camastra notes.

The program then advances to a virtual, facilitator-led workshop where participants engage in real-time collaborative activities.

“This interactive format allows participants to practice their leadership and communication skills directly, receiving immediate feedback from facilitators,” Camastra shares.

"It's about translating theory into practice, enhancing both understanding and performance."

Skills Sought by MRO Companies

Aircraft Academy's industry insights highlight that B1/B2 aircraft mechanics are in high demand worldwide, as operators and MRO companies seek well-trained professionals who can adapt to various maintenance tasks.

"MRO companies want mechanics who are versatile enough to handle both

heavy maintenance in the hangar and line-maintenance tasks on the go," says Jezequel.

This adaptability is critical, as it allows technicians to transition seamlessly between different roles, ensuring smooth operations in a dynamic environment.

With the right motivation, a young engineer has the potential to become what's known in the industry as a "flying spanner"—a highly skilled technician who can travel globally to support airlines and operators.

"A 'flying spanner' is more than a mechanic; it's a multi-faceted role that combines technical expertise with a spirit of adventure," Jezequel explains.

Despite increasing salaries over the past two decades, the MRO industry faces a shortage of skilled mechanics and technicians.

Today's younger workforce often has higher expectations for work-life balance, which can sometimes clash with the 24/7 demands of aircraft maintenance.

"While it's a challenging field, fresh graduates can feel secure in the knowledge that qualified mechanics are highly sought after," Jezequel adds.

Not only is the industry offering stable and well-compensated positions, but it also provides ample career advancement opportunities for those entering the field. For graduates ready to step into this evolving industry, the MRO sector offers both stability and a pathway to professional growth.

Addressing Global Training Challenges

1 - Diverse Needs Across Member States: The International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO) faces challenges in delivering training tailored to the varied economic development and technological infrastructure of its member states.

"The variability in these factors requires a tailored approach to our training programs," explains Camastra.

2 - Language Barriers: Language differences can significantly hinder effective training delivery.

"We provide training materials in multiple languages and ensure our instructors are proficient in the local languages of the regions they serve," Camastra adds.

3 - Resource Constraints: Some member states, particularly those with less developed aviation sectors, often struggle with limited resources for training.

"To reduce financial burdens, we offer scholarships and flexible training options, including online courses and virtual workshops," says Camastra.

4 - Technological Disparities: Varying levels of technological capabilities can affect the effectiveness of training programs.

"We provide diverse formats for training—ranging from in-person sessions to hybrid models—to accommodate different technological environments," she notes.

5 - Cultural Differences: Cultural contexts can impact training effectiveness.

"By involving local experts and customizing our approaches to respect cultural norms, we enhance the overall effectiveness of our training."

6 - Coordination and Standardization: Ensuring consistency and standardization while addressing local needs can be challenging.

"We maintain global standards but allow for regional adaptations to ensure training remains relevant and effective worldwide," she explains.

7 - Sustainability and Continuity: Political and economic instability can challenge the long-term sustainability of training programs.

"We focus on building local capacity by investing in regional training centers and local instructors," Camastra states.

Bridging Theory and Practice

At Aircraft Academy, the commitment to strong communication with civil aviation authorities worldwide ensures that students receive top-notch training.

Jezequel notes, "We find all of the Civil Aviation Authorities willing and eager to help."

He points out that while updating manuals may occasionally be necessary, it's a rare occurrence since the original documents are produced in France to very high standards.

A significant advantage for students comes from the academy's decision to recruit instructors from the ranks of experienced engineers at Vallair Group.

Jezequel highlights, "These instructors aren't just academics in a classroom; they're working at the sharp end every day."

Their dedication and enthusiasm for their work allow them to share invaluable real-world insights, fostering well-rounded skills in MRO technicians and engineers.

This practical expertise is essential as students prepare for their careers in aviation maintenance.

ICAO Training is committed to making aviation education accessible for professionals across both developed and developing countries.

To achieve this, they employ several effective strategies:

1 - Diverse Training Formats: ICAO recognizes that professionals have varying levels of technological access and learning preferences.

Camastra explains, "We offer a range of training formats to accommodate these differences."

2 - In-Person Training: This is conducted at ICAO Regional Training Centers (RTCs) or partner institutions, allowing participants to engage directly with instructors and peers.

3 - Online Courses: Accessible from anywhere with an internet connection, these courses are designed to be flexible and self-paced, catering to the needs of busy professionals.

4 - Blended Learning: This approach combines online modules with in-person sessions to provide a comprehensive learning experience tailored to local needs.

Camastra adds, "Blended learning is a powerful way to meet the diverse needs of our trainees."

Through these strategies, ICAO Training ensures that aviation professionals around the globe can access high-quality education and training, enhancing their skills and career prospects.

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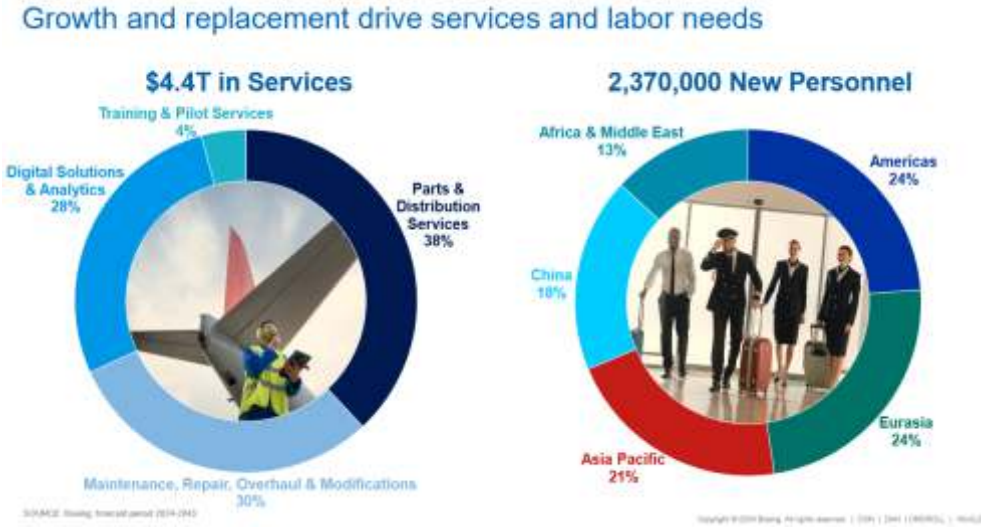
COMMERCIAL AVIATION continues to tread path to full recovery and growth

About 9.5 billion passengers traveled by the end of 2024, the first year for global passenger volume to fully recover and surpass 2019 levels, the Airports Council International (ACI) World reported. And buoyed by a healthy demand for global connectivity, more people are expected to travel in the coming years.

By Gemma Q. Casas

Commercial aviation, the industry that enables the transportation of passengers and cargo by air, has remarkably rebounded from the turbulence of the COVID-19 pandemic and is forecast to see more growth in the coming years.



According to the International Air Transport Association (IATA), full-year demand for 2024, measured in cargo ton-kilometers (CTK), increased by 11.3% (12.2% for international operations) compared to 2023. Full-year 2024 demand exceeded the record volumes set in 2021. International full-year passenger traffic in 2024 increased 13.6% compared to 2023, and capacity rose 12.8%. Domestic full-year traffic for 2024 rose 5.7% compared to the prior year, while capacity expanded by 2.5%.

Facilitating global trade and connectivity, both cargo and passenger traffic on air posted record-breaking growth in 2024, indicating more activities in the movement of people and goods flown in the sky, making the COVID crisis seemingly a distant dark past that prompted a global stop on traveling to prevent the spread of the virus.

According to the International Air Transport Association (IATA), full-year demand for 2024, measured in cargo ton-kilometers (CTK), increased by 11.3% (12.2% for international operations) compared to 2023. Full-year 2024 demand exceeded the record volumes set in 2021.

IATA, which represents 340 airlines comprising over 80% of global air traffic, reported the total full-year passenger traffic in 2024 (measured in revenue passenger kilometers or RPKs) rose 10.4% compared to 2023. This was 3.8% above pre-pandemic (2019) levels. Total capacity, measured in available seat kilometers (ASK), was up 8.7% in 2024. The overall load factor reached 83.5%, a record for full-year traffic.

International full-year passenger traffic in 2024 increased 13.6% compared to 2023, and capacity rose 12.8%. Domestic full-year traffic for 2024 rose 5.7% compared to the prior year, while capacity expanded by 2.5%.

Fascinating Crossroads

The commercial aviation industry is facing a fascinating crossroads. It faces both new challenges and exciting opportunities.

The pandemic grounded a significant portion of global air travel, leading to unprecedented losses for airlines. But as travel restrictions eased, pent-up demand fueled a strong rebound in passenger numbers.

But this resurgence is not the same across all regions. Domestic travel has generally recovered faster than international travel, and some regions are experiencing stronger growth than others. For example, Asia-Pacific is expected to see a significant increase in air travel demand in the coming years, driven by rising incomes and a growing middle class.

Challenges on the Horizon

While commercial aviation has survived what could be its worst crisis in modern history, the COVID-19 pandemic, global economic and political uncertainties continue to impact its growth.

Economic headwinds such as inflation, potential recessions, adverse trade policies, among others, could impact travel demand. Airlines are also facing rising operating costs, particularly jet fuel prices, which could squeeze profit margins.

Then, there are issues on sustainability. Aviation is a significant contributor to greenhouse gas emissions, and there is increasing pressure on the industry to reduce its environmental footprint. This is driving innovation in areas such as using sustainable aviation fuels (SAF) and more fuel-efficient aircraft.

Add to that, the industry is also facing workforce shortages, particularly highly-skilled workers, including pilots, engineers and ground staff. Analysts said this is partly due to early retirements during the pandemic and a lack of new talent entering the field.

There are also concerns on infrastructure limitations in the industry. Many airports are operating at or near capacity, and there is a need for investment in new infrastructure to accommodate future growth in air travel.

Innovation and Transformation

The future of commercial aviation is being shaped by several key trends, technological advancements topped the list.

Digital technologies are transforming the passenger experience, from online booking and check-in to in-flight entertainment and connectivity. Artificial intelligence (AI) is being used to optimize flight operations, improve fuel efficiency, and personalize customer service. Digitalization is also visibly changing passengers' experience at airports.

In air cargo, digital solutions are also changing the industry's business landscape. Digital tools now automate manual tasks like documentation, booking, and tracking, reducing errors and speeding up operations. Real-time data and analytics provide insights for optimizing routes, capacity planning, and resource allocation.

Digitalization has also empowered the air cargo industry to do business with online booking platforms that offer easy booking, rate comparison, and real-time updates, improving convenience for customers. And customers now have access to real-time information about their shipments, increasing trust and satisfaction.

Sustainability is a major issue confronting commercial aviation with carbon-emission a direct-impact of its activities. The industry had since committed to reducing its environmental impact through various initiatives, including the development and adoption of SAF, investing in more fuel-efficient aircraft, and improving operational efficiency.

New business models, such as low-cost carriers, continue to disrupt the market, offering affordable air travel options to a wider range of passengers. The development of electric vertical takeoff and landing (eVTOL) aircraft has the potential to revolutionize urban transportation, offering a faster and more sustainable way to travel within cities.

Boeing Commercial Market Outlook

Boeing Company, the world's largest aerospace company and leading manufacturer of commercial jetliners and defense, space and security systems, says over the next two decades or through 2043, the world would need 43,975 new airplanes, 1005 of which are freighters.

Boeing described the commercial aviation as resilient and in the long-term, both passenger and cargo market segments, will continue to outpace economic growth.

"Consumers are prioritizing travel in an increasingly connected world, aviation development is accelerating in emerging markets, and supply chain and e-commerce growth are supporting air cargo demand. Like air traffic, airlines have also shown resilience.

World air cargo market to demand more than 2,800 freighters by 2043

The global airline network is back to 2019 levels and has adapted to new market trends. Route competition remains high. Plus, airlines are managing fleets and boosting productivity to remain profitable in a dynamic global environment," Boeing said in its report.

"Overall, Boeing expects the market for support and services to be worth $4.4 trillion in the 20-year period between 2024 and 2043. Support and services functions are diverse in terms of sales, activity scope, capital intensity, and competitive environments. We segment these service functions as: maintenance, repair, overhaul, and modifications; parts and supply chain; training and professional services; and digital solutions and analytics," it added.

Growth in the passenger market segment is fueled by increasing demand for travel across all continents. While the cargo market segment's growth is positively influenced by good manufacturing volume, supply chain resilience and the rise of e-commerce.

Boeing pointed out about 10,000 tons of e-commerce goods are shipped worldwide, the equivalent of 100 B777 flights a day.

Airbus Market Forecast

Airbus, Europe's largest aeronautics and space company, is optimistic commercial aviation is heading to more growth with COVID behind us.

"Expanding economies and global population, growing middle class, improved infrastructure and traffic stimulation from airlines offering new affordable flights, all contribute to traffic growth. People want and need to fly. Aviation connects people, is a catalyst for trade, enables commerce, and supports communities," Airbus sums up its analysis on its Global Market Forecast 2024-2043 report.

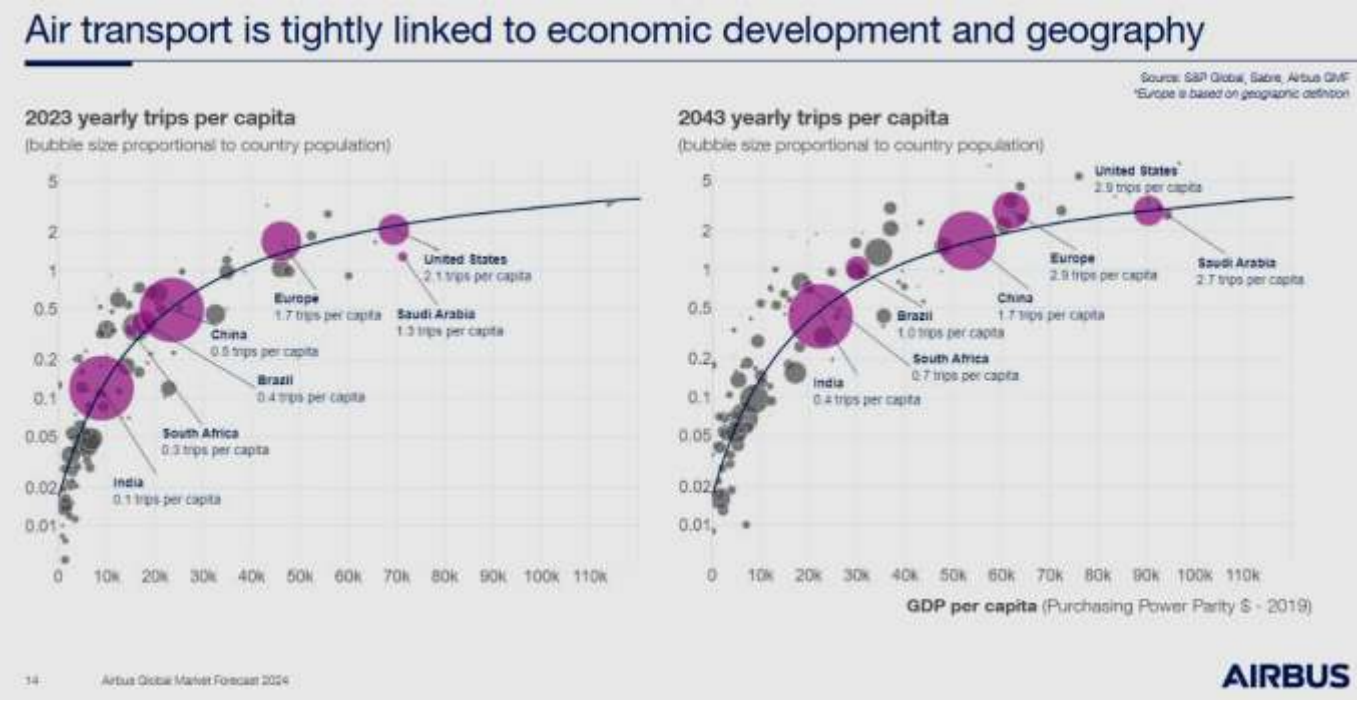
"Initial average traffic growth rate of 8.4% CAGR until 2027 as it recovers growth lost during the pandemic. Long term trend: average annual pax traffic growth of 3.6% per year from 2027 to 2043, and 3.1% for freight. China and India, and more generally Asia-Pacific as a whole, will power growth, further shifting aviation's center of gravity towards Asia," it added.

Airbus said the world would need 42,420 new passenger and freighter deliveries over the next 20 years.

"People want to travel, and over the next 20 years, Airbus forecasts traffic will more than double (x2.4). In the first three years, Airbus expects traffic to grow at 8% per year, to catch up lost growth over the pandemic, before reconnecting with an annual growth of approximately 3.6% from 2027 onwards," Airbus said.

"New aircraft deliveries (Passenger aircraft over 100 seats and Freighters over 10 tons payload) will increasingly replace older, less fuel-efficient aircraft. Over the next 20 years we forecast a demand for more than 42,000 new deliveries. These aircraft will further reduce fuel burn per revenue passenger kilometer (RPK) which has already halved since 1990," it added.

For cargo, Airbus sees express air cargo to surpass general air cargo presumably due to the continued growth of e-commerce.



The Sky's the Limit

The commercial aviation industry is certainly poised for continued growth in the coming years, driven by rising global incomes, increasing connectivity, and the ongoing development of new technologies. While the industry faces challenges, it is also embracing innovation and transformation to ensure a sustainable and efficient future.

Airports Council International (ACI) World and the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO) in their joint Passenger Traffic Report, Trends, and Outlook noted about 9.5 billion passengers traveled in 2024. By 2030, this number is projected to exceed 12 billion, driven by growth in international markets, particularly in the Asia-Pacific and Middle East regions.

By 2042, global passenger traffic is projected to reach 19.5 billion, representing a twofold increase compared to the levels recorded in 2024.

But this growth will be accompanied by significant investments in new aircraft, airport infrastructure, and air traffic management systems. The industry will also need to address the challenges of sustainability and workforce shortages, among others, to ensure its long-term success.

The future of commercial aviation looks bright. The industry is resilient, innovative, and committed to providing safe, efficient, and sustainable air travel for passengers around the world. As technology continues to advance and new business models emerge, the skies are the limit for this dynamic and essential sector.

GLOBAL BUSINESS AVIATION

Redefining Excellence in 2025 and Beyond

Business aviation has come a long way since the first private jets took to the skies in the mid-20th century. Today, it is a thriving industry that caters to executives, entrepreneurs, and high-net-worth individuals who value the flexibility, efficiency, and luxury that private air travel offers.

By Laique Khan

As we look ahead to 2025 and beyond, the business aviation sector is poised for exciting developments and steady growth, with new technologies and evolving customer preferences shaping its future.

According to the recent study by Global Market Insights Inc., the business jets market was valued at USD 33.2 billion in 2024 and is projected to be worth USD 68.5 billion by the end of 2034.

Technological advancements are revolutionizing the business aviation sector, boosting performance, safety, and efficiency in business jets. The use of lightweight materials like composites is lowering aircraft weight, resulting in better fuel efficiency.

Meanwhile, cutting-edge engine technologies are optimizing fuel economy, and enhanced avionics and entertainment systems are elevating passenger comfort. As sustainability takes center stage in aviation, manufacturers are exploring pioneering solutions, such as hydrogen-powered jets, to replace traditional fuels with zero-emission alternatives. These innovations are driving the future of business aviation toward greater sustainability and superior performance.

The integration of artificial intelligence (AI) in flight planning and operations enhances safety and reduces operating costs, providing a seamless travel experience. Moreover, innovations like supersonic business jets are making a comeback, promising faster-than-ever intercontinental travel by mid-decade.

A steady rise in air travel across both developing and developed nations is expected to drive demand for new aircraft and airports in key countries. This growth is fueled by an increase in individuals' net worth and purchasing power in the post-pandemic era. As the global economy gradually recovers and returns to pre-pandemic conditions, rising wealth is expanding the market for corporate jets.

The State of Business Aviation in 2025

A Robust Market

The business aviation industry is set for a period of sustained growth and innovation. According to Honeywell's 2024 Global Business Aviation Outlook, the sector is expected to deliver 830 new business jets valued at $27 billion in 2025 alone. This impressive figure caps off a remarkable six-year stretch that began in 2019, during which aircraft deliveries increased by 16% and spending on new aircraft climbed by 32%.

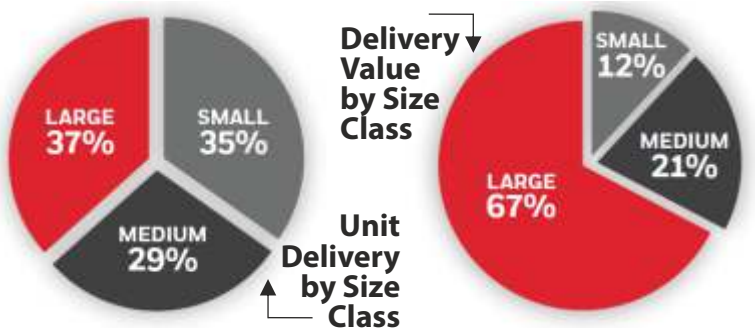
Looking further ahead, the outlook remains positive. Between 2024 and 2033, aircraft owners and operators are projected to invest an estimated $280 billion in new business jets. This 10-year forecast represents a slight increase from the previous year's projection of $278 billion. During this period, a total of 8,500 new business jets are expected to be delivered, with the industry maintaining a steady growth rate.

> **Demand for new business jets remains strong and we're expecting steady growth to continue over the next decade. The industry is well beyond pre-pandemic production levels and we don't see that changing any time soon. Our forecast shows strong growth in 2025 and then sustained deliveries with consistent growth from a new, much higher baseline"**
>
> ***- Jim Currier President and CEO***
> ***Honeywell Aerospace Technologies***

Key Trends Shaping the Industry

Preference for Larger Aircraft

One of the most significant trends in business aviation is the growing preference for larger aircraft with extended ranges. This shift is driven by operators' desire for jets that can comfortably carry more passengers on longer flights. The trend towards larger cabins has been a key factor in the impressive growth of business aviation deliveries and expenditures in recent years.



In fact, larger jets are expected to account for 37% of aircraft deliveries and a whopping 67% of aircraft expenditures over the next decade. This underscores the value that operators place on factors such as range, passenger capacity, and overall cabin experience.

Performance-Driven Purchase Decisions

When it comes to choosing a new aircraft, operators prioritize performance-related factors above all else. Range tops the list of purchase drivers, followed by operating cost and maximum payload/number of passengers. Interestingly, acquisition cost ranks relatively low on the list of priorities, tied for ninth place with airframe dimensions.

This focus on performance and total cost of ownership, rather than just upfront costs, reflects a mature and sophisticated approach to aircraft acquisition in the business aviation sector.

Increased Flight Activity

The demand for business aviation services shows no signs of slowing down. An overwhelming 93% of operators surveyed expect to fly as many or more hours in 2025 as they did in 2024. This continued high level of activity is primarily driven by growing passenger demand, highlighting the enduring value proposition of business aviation.

Expanding Access

Business aircraft access continues to expand as new users enter the market through various channels. Fractional ownership, leasing, and jet card programs are all contributing to increased demand for new aircraft. These alternative ownership and access models are making business aviation more accessible to a broader range of users, further fueling industry growth.

Regional Outlook

The demand for business jets continues to rise, as indicated by Honeywell's 2024 forecast predicting robust sales over the next decade. This growth is fueled by an increase in first-time buyers and an expanding market in Asia-Pacific and the Middle East, which are emerging as hubs for business aviation.

Aircraft deliveries are projected to grow at a compounded annual rate of 2% between 2024 and 2033, while expenditures are expected to increase at a slightly faster pace of 3% annually. These steady growth rates follow an exceptionally strong period from 2019 to 2025, during which deliveries surged by 16% and spending climbed by 32%.

North American Dominance

North American operators are expected to take delivery of two-thirds of business jets produced in the next five years, slightly more than projected in last year's report. This underscores the region's continued dominance in the global business aviation market.

Latin American Growth

Latin America stands out as an exception to the global trend, with increased flight activity in Brazil doubling the region's demand for new business jets. The region is now expected to account for about 10% of total global deliveries, up from 5% in the previous year.

European and Asian Markets

While still significant players in the global market, Europe and Asia Pacific have seen slight decreases in their five-year delivery projections. European operators are expected to account for 13% of deliveries, down from 14% in the previous year, while Asia Pacific's share has decreased from 11% to 7%.

Middle East and Africa

The Middle East and Africa region has also seen a decrease in its projected share of deliveries, dropping from 6% to 3%. This change may be attributed to various geopolitical and economic factors affecting the region.

The Future of Business Aviation

Sustainable Aviation

As the aviation industry faces increasing pressure to reduce its environmental impact, business aviation is taking significant steps towards sustainability. Sustainable Aviation Fuel (SAF) has emerged as a key focus area, ranking as the second-most common sustainability method among operators.

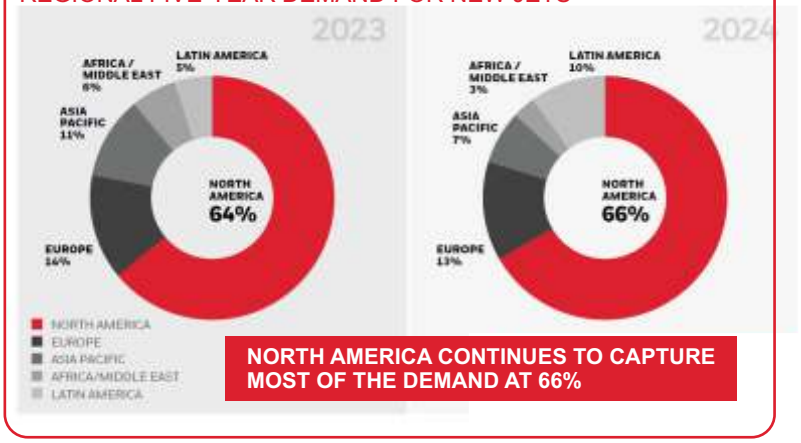
> **However, the adoption of SAF faces several challenges. Operators identified cost and availability as the leading obstacles to broader SAF adoption. There are also concerns about the impact of SAF on aircraft reliability and its actual environmental benefits. Despite these challenges, studies have shown that SAF blends can be highly effective drop-in replacements for conventional jet fuel, potentially reducing greenhouse gas emissions by up to 80%.**

Technological Advancements

The next generation of business jets is set to push the boundaries of what's possible in private air travel. New and refreshed aircraft models are setting new standards with their spacious cabins, impressive ranges, improved fuel efficiency, and breakthrough technologies.

The introduction of automation and AI systems in aircraft systems is expected to revolutionize the industry, enhancing safety and operational efficiency. With advancements in AI, business jets could offer more personalized in-flight experiences, adjusting cabin settings, providing real-time data for passengers, and even optimizing flight paths to ensure the most efficient route.

REGIONAL FIVE-YEAR DEMAND FOR NEW JETS



Another key trend in business aviation is the rise of on-demand services facilitated by digital platforms. By 2025, digital transformation will likely accelerate further with the rise of virtual assistants, improved mobile apps, and other tools that make booking flights, managing schedules, and accessing private aviation services easier than ever before. This will make private aviation more accessible to a wider audience, including SMEs and those seeking occasional access to private jets.

Advanced Avionics

One of the most exciting developments in business aviation is the introduction of advanced avionics systems like Honeywell Anthem. This system represents the first always-on cloud-connected flight deck, featuring intuitive interfaces, touchscreen displays, and an easily configurable layout. Such innovations are designed to reduce pilot workload and make flying easier and safer.

Enhanced Connectivity

In-flight Wi-Fi has become a necessity for business travelers, and the latest satellite communications systems are rising to meet this demand. For instance, Honeywell's JetWave X satellite communications system provides faster, more consistent, and more reliable connected experiences worldwide.

Fuel Efficiency and Emissions Reduction

The current generation of business jet engines is more fuel-efficient and environmentally friendly than ever before. Modern jets use 15-20% less fuel than previous-generation aircraft and produce fewer greenhouse gas emissions. Looking ahead, engineers are working on a new family of gas turbine engines that promise to be even lighter, quieter, and more powerful, while being capable of running on 100% sustainable aviation fuel.

Electric and Hybrid-Electric Aircraft

While not explicitly mentioned in the provided search results, it's worth noting that electric and hybrid-electric aircraft are likely to play an increasingly important role in the future of business aviation. These technologies have the potential to significantly reduce emissions and operating costs, particularly for shorter flights.

Electric Vertical Takeoff and Landing (eVTOL) aircraft, in particular, are generating significant buzz in the industry. These innovative aircraft promise to revolutionize urban air mobility, potentially offering a new dimension to business aviation by providing quick, efficient transportation for short-distance trips, such as from city centers to airports.

Challenges and Opportunities

While the outlook for business aviation is generally positive, the industry faces several challenges. Geopolitical tensions, economic uncertainty, inflation, supply chain constraints, and emerging environmental requirements could all impact order volumes and production rates in the coming decade.

However, the business aviation community has proven resilient in the face of challenges. The industry's ability to adapt and innovate positions it well to navigate these potential headwinds and capitalize on the opportunities presented by technological advancements and changing customer preferences.

Final Thoughts

As we look towards 2025 and beyond, the business aviation industry stands on the cusp of an exciting new era. With steady growth projected, a strong focus on performance and sustainability, and groundbreaking technological innovations on the horizon, the future of private air travel looks bright.

The industry's commitment to enhancing the passenger experience, improving operational efficiency, and reducing environmental impact will likely drive continued innovation and growth. From larger, more capable aircraft to advanced avionics and potentially revolutionary electric and hybrid-electric technologies, business aviation is poised to offer even greater value to its users in the years to come.

While challenges remain, the resilience and adaptability demonstrated by the business aviation sector suggest that it is well-equipped to navigate the complexities of the global marketplace. As we move forward, business aviation will continue to play a crucial role in connecting people and businesses around the world, driving economic growth, and pushing the boundaries of what's possible in air travel.

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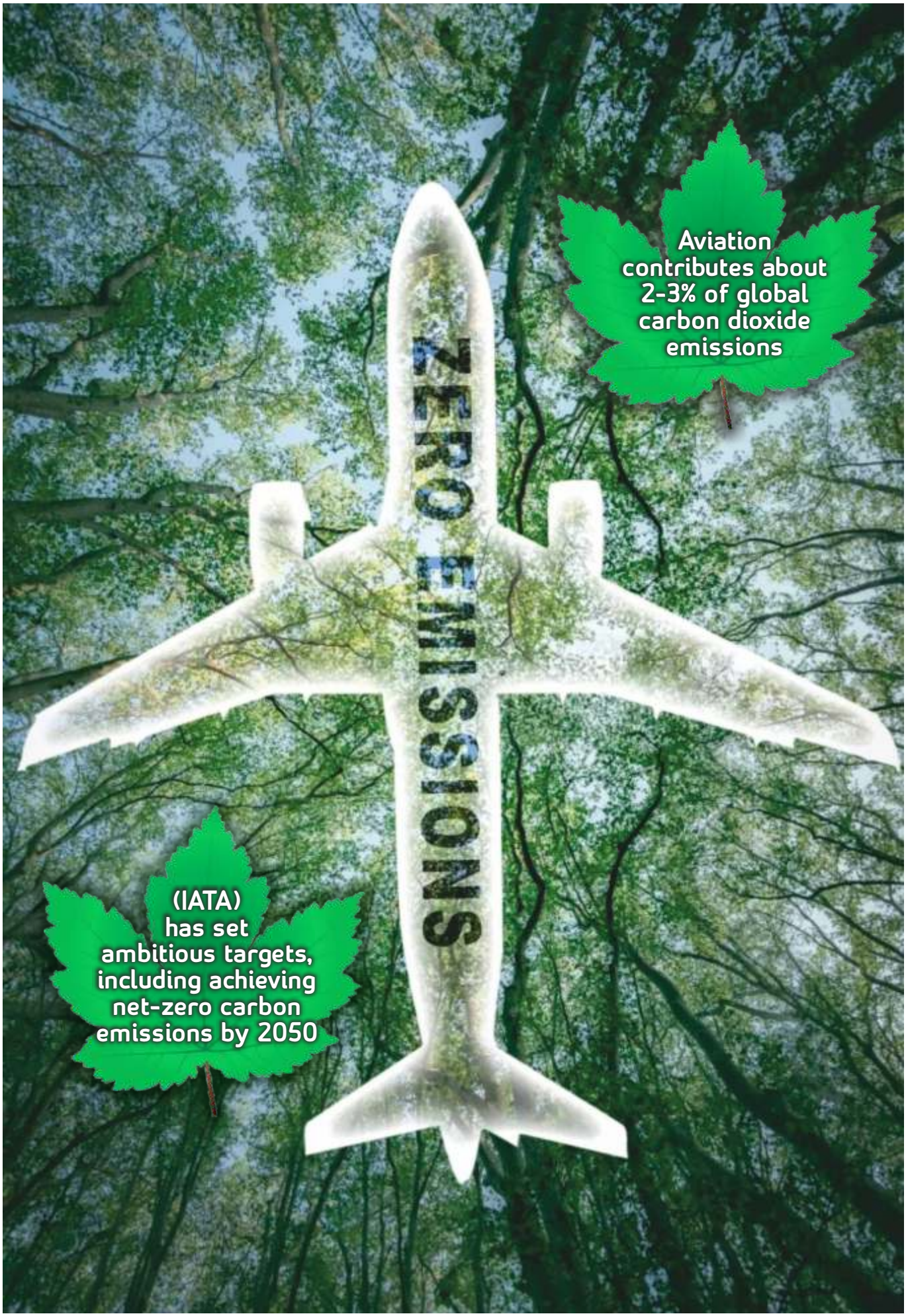
Aviation contributes about 2-3% of global carbon dioxide emissions
ZERO EMISSIONS
(IATA) has set ambitious targets, including achieving net-zero carbon emissions by 2050

Charting a Greener Sky: The Road to Sustainable Aviation

By Laique Khan

Aviation has always represented humanity's innovative spirit—but as global temperatures rise and ecosystems face unprecedented threats, the industry must now become a beacon of sustainability. With mounting pressure to reduce emissions and adapt to climate-conscious consumer expectations, the aviation sector stands at a crossroads.

Aviation contributes approximately 2-3% of global carbon dioxide emissions, a figure projected to rise with increasing air travel demand. The industry's environmental footprint extends beyond carbon emissions, encompassing noise pollution, water consumption, and waste generation. Recognizing these challenges, the International Air Transport Association (IATA) has set ambitious targets, including achieving net-zero carbon emissions by 2050. Achieving these goals necessitates a multifaceted approach, integrating technological innovation, operational efficiency, and infrastructural transformation.

The Role of Emerging Technologies in Sustainable Aviation

Sustainability in aviation is driven not just by organizational initiatives but also by the advent of groundbreaking technologies. Electric and hybrid-electric propulsion systems, sustainable aviation fuels (SAF), and advancements in air traffic management are reshaping the industry's environmental landscape.

1. Electric and Hybrid-Electric Aircraft: Companies like VoltAero and Pipistrel are pioneering electric and hybrid-electric aircraft designs for regional and short-haul flights. These aircraft significantly reduce noise pollution and CO2 emissions, making them ideal for urban and regional operations. While electric propulsion is still limited by battery technology, continued investment and innovation promise a cleaner future for air travel.

2. Sustainable Aviation Fuels (SAF): SAFs, derived from renewable resources like waste oils, agricultural residues, and algae, can reduce lifecycle carbon emissions by up to 80%. Airlines such as Etihad Airways and Lufthansa are actively incorporating SAFs into their operations. However, scaling production and reducing costs remain critical challenges for widespread adoption.

3. Enhanced Air Traffic Management (ATM): Air traffic inefficiencies lead to unnecessary fuel consumption and emissions. Modern ATM systems, such as satellite-based navigation and performance-based air traffic procedures, are minimizing these inefficiencies. Eurocontrol estimates that optimized ATM can reduce aviation emissions by 10-12%, emphasizing the importance of such initiatives.

Sustainable Aviation Fuel: The Industry's Bright Spot Amid Challenges

Sustainable Aviation Fuel (SAF) has emerged as one of the most promising solutions for reducing aviation's carbon footprint. Unlike conventional jet fuel, SAF is derived from renewable sources such as used cooking oil, agricultural residues, and municipal waste, producing up to 80% fewer lifecycle carbon emissions.

However, SAF production remains limited. According to the Sustainable Aviation Outlook 2024, only 0.53% of aviation's fuel needs are met by SAF despite production tripling to 1.875 billion liters this year. Scaling up SAF to meet future demand requires thousands of new facilities, each costing an estimated $250 million, underscoring the $5 trillion price tag associated with the industry's 2050 net-zero targets.

According to IATA estimates, if the aviation industry relies on traditional jet kerosene, it is expected to produce approximately 1.8 billion tonnes of carbon emissions by 2050. Achieving net-zero emissions will require 65% of these reductions to come from Sustainable Aviation Fuel (SAF). This translates to a demand of over 360 million tonnes (450 billion liters) of SAF per year by 2050, derived from all available sustainable feedstocks.

Key Challenges:

- **Cost: SAF is 3-5 times more expensive than conventional jet fuel.**
- **Supply Chain: Feedstocks are limited, and infrastructure for large-scale production is still in its infancy.**
- **Policy Gaps: The industry needs stronger government support in the form of subsidies and mandates.**

Despite these challenges, airlines are taking proactive steps. Air France-KLM and Lufthansa have led SAF adoption, while airports such as Schiphol in Amsterdam now mandate SAF blends. Airlines and policymakers must work collaboratively to bridge funding gaps, scale production, and ensure SAF's affordability.

According to figures published on the ICAO website, international efforts to enhance the production of SAF are making continuous progress, as shown in the data below

- 122 airports distributing SAF
- 53 billion litres under offtake agreements
- 313 Announced Facilities for SAF and LCAF
- 42 feedstocks recognized under ICAO CORSIA
- 23 Stakeholder Action Groups

The UAE: A Regional Leader in Aviation Sustainability

The UAE has firmly positioned itself as a global leader in sustainable aviation. In alignment with its Net Zero by 2050 Strategic Initiative, the country is leveraging innovative policies and technologies to reduce emissions across its aviation ecosystem. The UAE reaffirmed its commitment to sustainable aviation at COP28, emphasizing the integration of SAF and the development of green airport infrastructure.

Al Maktoum International Airport:

A Model for Circular Economy in Aviation

Al Maktoum International Airport (AMI) is not just an aviation hub; it's a testing ground for sustainability initiatives rooted in the circular economy. In addition to its solar energy projects, the airport has implemented advanced waste management systems to achieve zero waste to landfill.

The airport's water conservation programs are equally impressive. Advanced water recycling systems allow for the reuse of greywater in irrigation and cooling, crucial in Dubai's arid climate. These efforts align with Dubai's broader sustainability goals, including the Dubai Clean Energy Strategy 2050, which aims to derive 75% of the city's energy from renewable sources by mid-century.

Passenger and cargo operations are also optimized for sustainability. Digital platforms enable real-time tracking of flights and ground operations, reducing delays and fuel wastage. Green taxiing systems, which allow aircraft to move using electric tugs instead of jet engines, further enhance energy efficiency.

Etihad Airways: Pioneering Green Flights

Etihad's Greenliner Program has showcased how operational efficiencies, SAF usage, and eco-piloting can collectively reduce emissions. Its 787 Dreamliner flights consistently outperform emission benchmarks, proving that incremental progress is possible while awaiting technological breakthroughs.

The Red Sea International Airport

This pioneering airport, designed by Foster + Partners, is fully powered by renewable energy and features cutting-edge technologies to minimize waste.

Saudi Arabia's Vision 2030 and Sustainable Airports

Saudi Arabia's Vision 2030 is a bold roadmap aimed at diversifying the nation's economy and reducing its reliance on oil. Sustainability in aviation plays a key role in this transformation, with airports like King Khalid International Airport (KKIA) in Riyadh and King Abdulaziz International Airport (KAIA) in Jeddah leading the way.

1. Renewable Energy Adoption: Solar power installations are becoming a hallmark of Saudi airports. At KAIA, solar panels not only provide energy for terminal operations but also support local grid systems. The integration of solar energy reduces dependency on fossil fuels, aligning with Vision 2030's renewable energy targets.

2. Green Building Standards: Saudi airports are increasingly adhering to green building certifications, such as LEED and BREEAM. These standards ensure energy-efficient designs, effective waste management, and the use of sustainable construction materials.

3. Community Engagement: Sustainability efforts extend beyond airport boundaries. Initiatives like tree-planting campaigns and environmental awareness programs engage local communities, fostering a collective commitment to sustainability.

The Red Sea International Airport

This pioneering airport, designed by Foster + Partners, is fully powered by renewable energy and features cutting-edge technologies to minimize waste. With its eco-conscious design, the airport is a flagship project for sustainable infrastructure in the region.

Saudi Arabian Airlines (Saudia)

Saudia recently conducted a SAF-powered demonstration flight, showcasing its commitment to greener aviation. In addition, the airline is collaborating with global partners to explore hydrogen-powered and electric aircraft for regional operations. These efforts align with Saudi Arabia's broader push to reduce its aviation emissions while supporting economic diversification through tourism and trade.

Case Studies: Real-World Implementation of Sustainable Initiatives

Air France-KLM: Leading SAF Adoption

Air France-KLM has integrated SAF into its operations, achieving a 0.6% SAF mix in 2022. Although modest, this progress represents the highest SAF adoption rate among European carriers. Its focus on offtake agreements and government-backed incentives has set a benchmark for other airlines.

Heart Aerospace: Electric Aviation Takes Flight

Heart Aerospace is leading the charge in developing electric-hybrid aircraft. Its ES-30, a 30-seater plane, is slated for commercial use by 2028. While electric aviation remains limited to short-haul flights, it represents an essential step toward decarbonizing regional aviation.

Singapore Airlines: Operational Efficiencies

Singapore Airlines' eco-piloting measures have reduced carbon emissions per flight by leveraging AI and machine learning. The airline also prioritizes fleet modernization, replacing older aircraft with fuel-efficient models.

What's Next? Navigating the Path to Net Zero

The road to sustainable aviation is challenging but not insurmountable. Key steps include:

1. Policy Collaboration: Governments must enact stronger SAF mandates and provide subsidies to reduce costs.

2. Industry-Wide Cooperation: Airlines, airports, and manufacturers need to collaborate on R&D and infrastructure development.

3. Consumer Education: Transparency about the environmental impact of flying and the benefits of sustainable options can influence traveler behavior.

Fact Check:

- **Electric and hydrogen-powered aircraft are expected to enter the commercial market by 2030, primarily for short-haul flights.**
- **SAF's potential to reduce aviation emissions by 65% by 2050 is widely accepted, but achieving this requires unprecedented investment.**
- **Innovations like AI-driven route optimization can cut emissions by up to 10% per flight, offering near-term benefits.**

Global Collaboration: The Need for Unified Action

While individual initiatives are commendable, the global nature of aviation necessitates unified action. Organizations like the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO) are working to establish industry-wide standards for sustainability. The Carbon Offsetting and Reduction Scheme for International Aviation (CORSIA) is a prime example, mandating airlines to offset emissions growth from international flights.

International collaboration is also evident in research and development. Partnerships between governments, academic institutions, and private enterprises are accelerating the development of next-generation aircraft and fuels. For instance, the European Union's Clean Sky initiative has brought together multiple stakeholders to pioneer green technologies for aviation.

A Collective Effort for a Sustainable Sky

Sustainable aviation is not just about technological breakthroughs; it's about reimagining the industry from the ground up. From pioneering SAF adoption to building green airports and exploring futuristic aircraft, the aviation sector must embrace incremental changes while striving for transformative solutions.

As the UAE and Saudi Arabia illustrate through their ambitious initiatives, regional leadership can inspire global change. By aligning innovation with environmental stewardship, the industry can chart a path to net zero—ensuring that the magic of flight endures for generations to come.

The path to sustainable aviation is undeniably challenging, but innovation offers hope. From Dronamics' eco-friendly drones to the transformative initiatives at Al Maktoum and Saudi airports, the aviation industry is proving that sustainability and growth can coexist. By fostering collaboration, investing in technology, and prioritizing environmental stewardship, the sector can chart a course toward a greener future.

In the words of IATA's Director General, "The freedom to fly has always come with responsibilities. Aviation's commitment to sustainability is a responsibility we take seriously, ensuring future generations can enjoy the benefits of air travel without compromising the planet."

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Military Technologies That's Changing the Face of Wars

By R. Chandrakanth

The evolution of military technologies is reshaping modern warfare, with aviation, drones, and Unmanned Aircraft Systems (UAS) playing pivotal roles. UAVs, in particular, are revolutionizing combat, intelligence, and surveillance operations. According to a recent market analysis by Next Move Strategy Consulting, the global Unmanned Aerial Vehicle (UAV) Market size is predicted to reach $48 billion by 2030, witnessing a robust CAGR of 13% from 2024 to 2030.

In an era of rapid technological advancement, the battlefield is evolving at an unprecedented rate. Military technologies are redefining the nature of warfare, with aviation and unmanned systems taking center stage.

Aircraft, drones, and Unmanned Aerial Vehicles (UAVs) are revolutionizing how wars are fought, offering enhanced capabilities in reconnaissance, precision strikes, and intelligence gathering. The integration of these cutting-edge technologies has created a paradigm shift, enabling military forces to conduct operations with increased accuracy, reduced risk to personnel, and improved strategic advantages.

The global military drone market size was valued at USD 21.81 billion in 2024 and is expected to grow from USD 24.25 billion in 2025 to reach USD 56.69 billion by 2033, growing at a CAGR of 11.20% during the forecast period (2025-2033).

As unmanned systems continue to advance, their roles in modern warfare grow, allowing for more flexible, adaptable, and effective military strategies. This transformation is not only changing the tactical landscape but also reshaping the future of defense and security globally.

In this exploration, we delve into the military technologies that are transforming the way wars are fought, with a particular focus on aviation and unmanned systems.

USA major arms supplier

According to the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI), in the past decade Israel has greatly increased its imports of major arms, primarily from the United States, Germany and Italy. Other countries have supplied military components, ammunition or services. SIPRI estimates that in the five-year period 2019-23, Israel was the world's 15th largest importer of major arms, accounting for 2.1 per cent of global arms imports in the period. Between 2019-13 it was ranked only 47th, giving a clear indication of how it has been piling up arms.

In 2019–23 the USA accounted for 69 per cent of Israel's arms imports. It

supplied a variety of major arms, including aircraft, armoured vehicles, missiles and ships. The Israel Defense Forces (IDF) rely heavily on arms imports from the USA. For example, all currently active combat aircraft in the Israeli air force were supplied by the USA with special modifications for Israeli use.

As recent as August 2024, the United States approved the sale of $20 billion in fighter jets and other military equipment to Israel that included sale of F-15 jets and equipment worth nearly $19 billion along with tank cartridges valued at $774 million, explosive mortar cartridges valued at over $60 million and army vehicles worth $583 million, as per Pentagon statement itself. The aerial bombardments that have razed cities to the ground in the Gaza strip and in Lebanon have been achieved by Israel using US-made planes by pilots trained with Italy-supplied trainer aircraft.

With such backing, Israel launched the 'Operation Swords of Iron' War which has had a devastating effect on human lives. Military technology has become the cornerstone of the Israel Defence Force's operational activities, where we see a play of digital and technological innovations. The 'pager' attack in Lebanon displayed not just how deep Israel had gotten in to intelligence, but using technologies in a way unheard of.

Age of multi-branch warfare

This is the age of multi-branch warfare – land, air, sea, cyber, economic etc – where there is so much interplay between all of them. Military offensive as well as defense have become equally important and these wars have shown how missile attacks can be minimized with a robust air defense system.

Sometime back the Chief of Staff of the United States Air Force, Gen. David W.Allvin had said how the military will face historic changes as it needs to adapt to the deep, fundamental shift in airpower occurring worldwide. Current conflicts are in fact showing how drones, new technologies and low-cost weapons are reshaping the modern battlefield.

"The changing character of war is coming upon us. The theater of war is going to require us to fight different. This will be part of the reinvention of our Air Force and airpower into the future."

The proliferation of these new lethal technologies can be seen in the ongoing wars, wherein air superiority is determining the damage. And air superiority includes the heavy deployment of unmanned systems not just for intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance (ISR), but to destroy targets with consummate ease.

Gen. James B.Hecker, commander of U.S.Air Forces in Europe, Africa and NATO Allied Air Command said at a conference "You'll see this proliferate more and more, which makes the importance of coming up with a low-cost solution to taking these things down, so we're not taking $700,000 missiles and shooting down a $5,000 drone. But we want to inflict that cost maybe on our

enemy should we be able to deter so I think you'll see that we'll be getting some of those capabilities as well."

Unmanned Systems to the fore

The humongous deployment of unmanned systems is become the norm as these systems have a very low production cost and can be mass produced in double quick time. The Pentagon recently unveiled a new round of aerial and maritime drones for Replicator, a massive effort to fast-track the delivery of unmanned weapons systems to the services. The Pentagon said these will offer versatile weapons for the units in the field, useful for targeting or surveillance of the enemy. The was considering 500 commercial firms for Replicator, awarding contracts to 30 companies, that's the scale for rapid deployment.

In the two conflicts, the world is witnessing for the first time ever how hundreds of missiles and hundreds of drones are deployed around the same time with devastating effect. The UAVs are getting smarter and deadlier, having stealth capabilities and carrying an impressive array of weapons. Countries have deployed UAVs for both surveillance and combat and whether it is for using air-to-ground missiles, laser-guided bombs, or air-to-air capability, these drones can perform these missions, leaving the fighter jets to go the distance with heavier payloads.

Some of the best known drones in the business are the MQ-9 Reaper from General Atomics; the RQ-4 Global Hawk from Northrop Grumman; the Chengdu GJ-2/ Wing Loong II from Chengdu Aircraft Industry Group; the Bayraktar TB2, developed by Baykar from Turkey; Sukhoi S-70 Okhotnik-B; Taranis from BAE Systems; Boeing MQ-28 Ghost Bat among others.

The XQ-58A Valkyrie is a low cost, high performance unmanned air vehicle developed through an Air Force Research Laboratory partnership with Kratos Defense & Security Solutions, Inc. Valkyrie is the next logical step in the evolution of UAVs – designed to serve as support to fighter jets, relying on either direct control of its manned peers or onboard AI. It can scout the battlefield, engage the enemy and sacrifice itself to shield manned aircraft.

The most impressive part of this whole package is the price, as the drone is supposed to eventually cost just $2 million apiece – comparable to a cruise missile and just a tiny fraction of the cost of an actual fighter jet. Being almost as capable as manned fighters, but with the advantage of being cheap and easily replaceable, allows an army to produce entire swarms of the type, overwhelming any kind of enemy defense. Similarly, the Boeing MQ-28 Ghost Bat, is a UCAV that incorporates AI and possesses the capability to communicate with sixth-generation fighters and bombers. Boasting a range exceeding 2,000 nautical miles and a combat radius of 900 miles, this Loyal Wingman is equipped with integrated sensor packages on board to facilitate Intelligence, Surveillance, Target Acquisition and Reconnaissance (ISTAR) operations, as well as tactical early warning missions and more.

The drones' symbolic status only grew when Predator which initially began as an UAV for but later was equipped with Hellfire missiles. And now it's the norm to have weaponised payloads. The new era of drone warfare is here to stay, deployed not just for counter-terrorism or counter insurgency but for full scale combat.

DC Aviation Al-Futtaim VIP Terminal

expands charter fleet with several aircraft, capitalizing on the surge in HNWIs to Dubai

New aircraft additions respond to growing demand from HNWIs and rising private jet charter market

DC Aviation Al-Futtaim VIP Terminal (DCAF), a leading business aviation services provider, has announced the expansion of its charter fleet with the addition of several new state-of-the-art aircraft. With the introduction of a Bombardier Global 7500 – one of only two available for charter in the Middle East, the Bombardier Global XRS, Challenger 604, two Hawker 4000 jets and a Pilatus PC-12, DCAF is continuing its commitment to offering unmatched luxury, flexibility and safety for its high-net-worth clientele.

As Dubai and the wider UAE continue to attract an increasing number of high-net-worth individuals (HNWIs), the demand for private charter services has experienced significant growth with the market projected to grow by 5% from 2025 to 2030. As per the latest industry reports, the number of HNWIs in the UAE has surged by 55 per cent over the past decade, reaching approximately 68,000 HNWIs in 2023, with an expected net inflow of 6,700 millionaires by the end of 2024.

The UAE has firmly established itself as a global hub for business, tourism and leisure, drawing affluent clients seeking both convenience and exclusivity in their travel options. DCAF's expanded charter fleet is a direct response to this demand, offering clients seamless, luxury travel experience and access to some of the latest, most advanced aircraft available in the industry today.

"We are excited to offer these new aircraft to our clients, as it marks a key milestone in our journey of expanding services and meeting the rising demand in the private aviation sector," said Holger Ostheimer, Managing Director of DC Aviation Al-Futtaim VIP Terminal. "The growth of the charter market in the region reflects a significant shift towards greater convenience, privacy and flexibility, which our services are designed to deliver. This fleet expansion reinforces our commitment to excellence, offering clients an unparalleled travel experience with the highest standards of safety and luxury."

The newly added aircraft offer a broad range of options from the ultra-long-range capabilities of the Global 7500, which connects Dubai to global destinations such as New York, Tokyo, Brazil and Cape Town, to the versatile PC-12 turboprop ideal for short regional hops, the fleet is designed to cater to all travel preferences. The Hawker 4000 and Challenger 604 are both equipped to handle mid-to-long haul routes, ensuring seamless transitions for business travelers and vacationers alike.

"Charter flights offer an unparalleled combination of flexibility and convenience that aligns perfectly with the evolving needs of our VVIP clientele," said Paul James, Director of Sales and Aircraft Management at DC Aviation Al-Futtaim VIP Terminal. "Whether it's for a business trip to Europe, a leisure vacation in Africa, or a long-haul flight to the Americas, our new fleet enables us to cater to all travel preferences, from short regional hops to ultra-long-range global flights. We are proud to offer a service that places the client's comfort and safety at the forefront, while ensuring reliability and seamless operations."

All the new aircraft on DCAF's charter fleet are equipped with the latest amenities to ensure a premium travel experience. These include high-speed Wi-Fi, personalized catering, reclining seats, onboard entertainment and fully customizable flight routes to suit individual preferences. Every detail is taken care of by an experienced team, including dedicated charter sales staff available 24/7, highly trained pilots and cabin attendants who specialize in delivering VIP services. With the added luxury of fully tailored travel itineraries, clients can enjoy a seamless and stress-free experience, from booking to landing.

DC Aviation Group has an impeccable safety record of over 40,000 incident-free flight hours and all group businesses prioritize safety as the cornerstone of their operations. DCAF is one of only two International Standard for Business Aircraft Handling (IS-BAH) Stage 3 certified FBO's in the Midde East and one among 27 organisations globally to attain this highest level of safety standard, comprehensive safety protocols and adherence to international aviation safety standards ensure that clients can travel with confidence.

DCAF is a joint venture between Dubai-based Al-Futtaim Group and Stuttgart-based DC Aviation Group. For more information on DCAF's charter services, please visit www.dc-aviation.ae/ , email charter@dc-aviation.ae or call +971 4 870 1800.

SolitAir

Redefines Regional Air Cargo Sector With Focus on Global South

SolitAir's mission to "Connect the Global South" reflects a deep commitment to addressing the unique challenges faced by emerging markets. The airline's focus on underserved routes not only enhances trade but also opens new channels for commerce and development. By bridging gaps in connectivity, SolitAir is playing a pivotal role in driving economic growth across Africa, the Indian subcontinent, and the GCC.

SolitAir, a newly launched cargo airline headquartered in Dubai, is rewriting the rules of the regional air freight industry as a daily scheduled carrier with a sharp focus on the 'middle mile' segment of logistics designed to provide airport-to-airport freight solutions that cater to the Middle East, Africa, the Sub-Continent and the Stans countries. With its mission to Connect the Global South, SolitAir is bridging regional logistics gaps and enabling commerce across underserved markets, all while setting new benchmarks in speed, reliability, and operational efficiency.

Marking its indelible impact to Global South's potential growth is the launch of its daily scheduled flights between Dubai and Riyadh in December 2024. Operating five days a week, this service directly connects Dubai World Central (DWC) to King Khalid International Airport (RUH), essentially helping businesses navigate seamlessly to other regional markets.

Prior, SolitAir launched the Dubai-Dhaka-Dubai route as well as the multisector Dubai-Hong Kong-Dhaka-Dubai flights.

The airline carries cargo on both legs of the journeys, meeting the needs of integrators, airlines, freight forwarders, and SMEs in the e-commerce sector.

Despite being a newcomer to the cargo aviation landscape, SolitAir has rapidly positioned itself as a key player in the sector. The airline's journey began with a compelling vision: to address capacity shortages, enhance connectivity, and drive economic growth across emerging markets. Within a short span of operations, SolitAir has already achieved several milestones, including setting up a network of GSAs at key Global South airports, securing key partnerships, launching scheduled services, and charting a clear course for regional and international expansion.

Central to this success is SolitAir's founder, Hamdi Osman, a seasoned veteran in logistics and business development. With over four decades of experience, including leadership roles at FedEx, Osman brings unmatched industry expertise and a deep commitment to fostering trade and connectivity. Under his leadership, SolitAir operates with an entrepreneurial spirit, supported by a team of industry veterans specializing in aviation, logistics, finance, and marketing.

Operational Excellence at the Heart of SolitAir

SolitAir's operational model is built on agility and precision. The airline's Dubai South facility, strategically located within the Jebel Ali Free Zone, provides unparalleled connectivity to regional markets. Equipped with state-of-the-art infrastructure, the premises include airside and landside access with loading bays on both sides, ensuring seamless cargo operations.

The airline handles a diverse range of cargo, including e-commerce goods, pharmaceuticals, perishables, dangerous goods, and high-value shipments. SolitAir's focus on middle-mile operations—transporting goods between regional airports within a six-hour flying radius—allows it to deliver cargo within a 12-to-24-hour timeframe. This operational efficiency is bolstered by streamlined customs clearance processes and advanced tracking technologies, resulting in a 98+% on-time delivery rate.

Cutting-Edge Technology for Seamless Operations

Innovation lies at the core of SolitAir's DNA. The airline leverages advanced digital technologies to optimize every aspect of its operations. For instance, the implementation of the proprietary tailor made software platform enhances operational efficiency by streamlining data management, shipment tracking, and customer service. SolitAir also provides clients with a 24/7 online portal for real-time shipment processing and tracking, ensuring a frictionless and satisfying customer experience.

In addition to technology, SolitAir has developed comprehensive training programs and operational manuals to uphold the highest standards of quality and safety. Regular audits and a robust governance structure further reinforce the airline's commitment to excellence.

A Growing Fleet to Meet Growing Demand

SolitAir's fleet currently consists of three Boeing 737-800 freighters, each with a range of 3,700 kilometers and a combined capacity of 69 tonnes. These narrow-bodied aircraft are ideal for the airline's regional focus, offering the flexibility and efficiency needed to serve smaller airports in underserved markets. More Boeing 737-800 will join SolitAir's fleet during the course of the year, enabling it to expand service to more key markets in India, Africa, and Central Asia.

Looking ahead, SolitAir aims to connect over 50 cities within the Global South, creating a robust network of trade routes that promote economic growth and development. The airline's growth strategy is underpinned by a commitment to sustainability, with plans to incorporate electric aircraft by 2026-2027 and adopt fuel-efficient practices to minimize carbon emissions.

The company has also secured key contracts with major logistics players, including ASL, and is in advanced discussions with integrators and e-commerce entities. These collaborations have solidified SolitAir's position in the highly competitive air cargo industry.

A Vision for the Global South

SolitAir's mission to "Connect the Global South" reflects a deep commitment to addressing the unique challenges faced by emerging markets. The airline's focus on underserved routes not only enhances trade but also opens new channels for commerce and development. By bridging gaps in connectivity, SolitAir is playing a pivotal role in driving economic growth across Africa, the Indian subcontinent, and the GCC.

Hamdi Osman emphasizes that SolitAir's vision goes beyond profitability. "Our goal is to contribute to the economic empowerment of the Global South by enhancing trade and connectivity. We are committed to building long-lasting relationships with our clients, prioritizing service over price, and pursuing sustainability in every aspect of our operations," he says.

Sustainability and Social Responsibility

In terms of sustainability, SolitAir is committed to exploring sustainable practices, including efficient fuel usage and optimizing routes to minimize carbon emissions, aligning with global environmental goals."

The airline is actively exploring ways to reduce its environmental impact, from optimizing flight routes to adopting energy-efficient technologies. Plans to incorporate electric aircraft by the end of the decade further underscore SolitAir's commitment to aligning with global environmental goals.

In addition to sustainability, SolitAir is deeply committed to social responsibility. The airline's operations support local businesses, promote regional trade, and create employment opportunities in underserved communities. By fostering economic growth, SolitAir is making a meaningful impact on the lives of people across the Global South.

As a boutique cargo airline, SolitAir has carved out a unique niche in the market. The company's middle-mile business model, coupled with its focus on underserved markets, has set it apart from competitors. SolitAir's brand is synonymous with reliability, efficiency, and innovation—qualities that resonate with its diverse client base.

The airline's strategic narrative, inspired by its mission to "Connect the Global South," is designed to foster trust and loyalty among clients. By emphasizing its role as a bridge between regions, SolitAir has positioned itself as a catalyst for change in the air cargo industry.

The Flight Paths Ahead

SolitAir's journey is just beginning. With ambitious plans for fleet expansion, network growth, and technological innovation, the airline is well on its way to becoming a leader in the regional air cargo sector. By staying true to its mission and values, SolitAir is poised to make a lasting impact on the Global South and beyond.

Hamdi Osman said: "In a world where connectivity is the key to progress, SolitAir is lighting the way forward - one cargo shipment at a time. SolitAir's vision emphasizes enhancing trade and economic growth by connecting routes across the Global South, thereby opening new channels for commerce and development."

Hamdi A. Osman

Founder & CEO, SolitAir

Hamdi A. Osman is a highly reputed leader in the realms of air cargo, logistics, entrepreneurship and investments, admired for his acute business sense and visionary leadership.

Hamdi, the Founder and CEO of SolitAir, a pioneering air freight carrier based in Dubai, is well ahead of his game despite being in his 70s. He brings with him a wealth of unparalleled experience and network culled from working for more than three decades at FedEx, one of the world's biggest air transport and logistics companies.

The Egypt-born Hamdi moved to the United States in 1976. By 1978, he joined FedEx, climbing up his way up to the corporate ladder through hard work and determination. By 1989, he was promoted as Managing Director of FedEx Express Domestic Operations for the New England area of the USA.

In 1991, Hamdi moved to Dubai as Managing Director for Middle East Operations. Six years later, he was promoted to Vice President for Operations for the Middle East, the Indian Subcontinent and Africa. In 2007, he was promoted to Sr. VP Operations for Europe, Middle East, Indian Subcontinent and Africa. His strategic vision and operational expertise were instrumental in driving FedEx's expansion and success across diverse markets. His hard-work as aptly rewarded with numerous company and international industry awards.

Hamdi's remarkable journey from his early days at FedEx to his current role as the driving force behind SolitAir is proof of his success as a business leader and game-changer innovator. Indeed, a force to be reckoned with in the changing landscape of the global air transport and logistics industry.

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SHARJAH AIRPORT:
A Gateway to the Future of Aviation

Sharjah Airport features a strategically positioned 4,060-meter runway, recognized as one of the longest in the region, designed to handle Code F aircraft with Cat II capabilities.

Since its inception in 1932, marked by the historic landing of the first flight on Al Mahatta runway, Sharjah Airport has established itself as a vital gateway for international and regional airlines operating to, from, and through the UAE.

Officially opening its doors 45 years later, the airport has continuously evolved into a world-class, state-of-the-art facility capable of accommodating the largest aircraft globally.

Sharjah Airport features a strategically positioned 4,060-meter runway, recognized as one of the longest in the region, designed to handle Code F aircraft with Cat II capabilities. This remarkable infrastructure ensures that all aircraft, including A380 and B748 can operate at full load capacity under various weather conditions.

An open sky policy facilitates hassle-free access for airline traffic from around the globe, while competitive landing and handling rates establish the airport as a preferred choice for both regional and international operators.

In addition to passenger services, Sharjah Airport has emerged as a key air cargo hub for major global carriers, supporting efficient freight operations. Located just 10 kilometers from Sharjah city center and a 20-minute drive from Dubai, the airport offers convenient access for passengers traveling not only from Sharjah but from other Northern Emirates as well.

The vision for Sharjah Airport is to rank among the top five regional airports by providing exceptional travel experience and superior services. A commitment to ensuring a safe travel experience, along with pioneering services for all airport users, is central to its operations. Collaborative efforts with stakeholders aim to foster an innovative environment that contributes to the overall growth of Sharjah.

Core values include pioneering the utilization of resources to position Sharjah Airport Authority (SAA) on the international stage, alongside maintaining accountability, transparency, and integrity in all operations. A culture of innovation is cultivated, fostering creativity in daily activities, while efforts are made to enhance the quality of life among partners through a focus on well-being. The commitment to sustainability drives the achievement of outstanding results through effective corporate capabilities, all while functioning as a cohesive team aligned with the strategic priorities of the Sharjah Government.

Strategic pillars concentrate on enhancing airport competitiveness, developing new revenue streams, and fostering robust partnerships. The goal is to establish a leading model for customer satisfaction while delivering high-quality internal services. Additionally, there is a dedication to empowering human resources to create a positive and innovative workplace culture, ensuring compliance with environmental standards, and maintaining a safe working environment.

Prioritization of high-quality airport infrastructure and advancement in digital transformation are also key focuses.

Sharjah Airport is poised to play a pivotal role in the future of aviation, dedicated to excellence and innovation while enhancing connectivity and economic growth in the region.

Sharjah Airport Certifications:

IATA Safety Audit for Ground Operations (ISAGO) accreditation

CEIV certified by IATA to handle Pharma Products

Ra3 certified handling agent as per the European Union (EU) for aviation security validation

A Leading 3PL Pioneer with Global Reach and Integrated Supply Chain Solutions

Al-Futtaim Logistics manages over 1.56 million sqm of multi-temperature warehouses and open yard storage facilities located within proximity to major air and sea hubs in the UAE, KSA and Oman.

Founded in 1980, Al-Futtaim Logistics is one of the 3PL pioneers in the UAE with global reach to 150 countries. It is part of the Al-Futtaim Group, a family-owned global business conglomerate based in the UAE engaged in various sectors such as automotive, retail, real estate, finance, logistics, aviation and aerospace.

Al-Futtaim Logistics manages over 1.56 million sqm of multi-temperature warehouses and open yard storage facilities located within proximity to major air and sea hubs in the UAE, KSA and Oman.

The company offers integrated logistics solutions, including multimodal (air/sea/land) freight, purchase order management, documentations & local services, customs clearance, multi-temperature warehousing, and dangerous goods handling for manufacturers & distributors in diverse sectors.

Certified for AEO by the UAE Federal Customs and Dubai Customs, with air side operations in major UAE airports and ASA-100 accredited freight and storage activities, Al-Futtaim Logistics provides customers with high quality, reliable and dynamic solutions. As the award-winning emerging aerospace logistics provider, the services are backed 24 by 7 AOG desks covering 350 stations worldwide with visibility to time critical shipments. Al-Futtaim Logistics aims to be the partner of choice building intelligent supply chain solutions for its customers.

Al-Futtaim's Aerospace Logistics Solutions

Aircraft Parts Logistics

- Handling, storage, and distribution of aviation spare parts, components, and tools.
- Time-critical supply chain solutions for AOG (Aircraft on Ground) situations.
- Secure warehousing with temperature and humidity control for sensitive components.

MRO (Maintenance, Repair & Overhaul) Support

- Logistics support for MRO facilities, ensuring seamless movement of parts and equipment.
- Customs clearance and regulatory compliance for aviation parts.
- Delivery of components to repair stations, manufacturers, and service providers.

Freight Forwarding for Aerospace

- Air, sea, and road freight services for aircraft components and engines.
- Expedited transport solutions for urgent aerospace shipments.
- Charter and express cargo options for critical aviation supply chain needs.

Defense & Government Aerospace Logistics

- Secure transport and warehousing for military and government aviation equipment.
- Compliance with defense logistics regulations and safety protocols.
- Project logistics for large-scale aerospace operations.

Airport & Airline Logistics Support

- Ground support equipment (GSE) transport and maintenance logistics.
- Coordination with airlines for efficient cargo handling and fleet management.
- Last-mile delivery services for aviation consumables and operational supplies.

contact@aflogistics.com
www.aflogistics.com

Why Al-Futtaim Logistics for Aerospace?

- Global Network: Strong international partnerships to support global aerospace logistics.
- Regulatory Expertise: Compliance with aviation and customs regulations.
- Time-Sensitive Solutions: 24/7 logistics support for urgent aircraft and airline needs.
- Secure Handling: Specialized storage and transportation for high-value aerospace components.

- **Headquartered in the UAE**
- **Established in 1980**
- **Airside operations in major UAE airports**
- **24 x 7 AOG operations**
- **ASA-100 accredited 3PL services**
- **65+ aerospace network member and 300+ stations**
- **Own aerospace hubs in Saudi Arabia and Oman by 2025**
- **Centralized aerospace services, with global coverage and dynamic freight, haulage and storage solutions**
- **Technicians Onboard Charters (TOC)**
- **Winner of Emerging Aerospace Logistics award**

The Skyplan Story:

Over 40 years of Excellence in Flight Operations

In conversation with Aviation Guide, Muhammad Sami President & CEO of Skyplan Services Limited, discusses the company's evolution, innovative solutions, and future vision.

Founded in 1983 in Canada, Skyplan has grown into a global leader in flight support, with key expansions in the Middle East, Asia, and Africa.

Their proprietary Aurora Flight Planning Solution and Flight Operations Management System enhance operational efficiency and compliance. Skyplan's holistic approach to trip planning, fuel management, and partnerships with airlines and airports set it apart.

Sami highlights the company's adaptability in tackling industry challenges such as rising costs and sustainability, emphasizing their commitment to AI-driven advancements.

Additionally, the Skyplan Aviation Academy in Dubai aims to equip aviation professionals with cutting-edge skills.

Looking ahead, Skyplan plans to integrate AI, expand market presence, and promote sustainability, reinforcing its role as a trusted partner in the aviation industry.

Can you provide a brief overview of Skyplan' s history, mission, and the key milestones that have shaped the company into a trusted flight support provider?

Skyplan has been a part of the aviation industry for over four decades, and it's a history we are incredibly proud of. We started modestly in Alberta, Canada, back in 1983 with one clear mission—to provide flight departments with the best tools and services for flight planning. Over the years, we have grown significantly, adapting to change and breaking new ground.

A recent milestone that stands out for us is the launch of the Skyplan Aviation Academy in Dubai in 2022, a step that reinforced our commitment to education and training in flight operations. Expanding to regions like the Middle East, Asia, and Africa has also allowed us to become a truly global partner in flight support. Each milestone represents our passion and drive to better serve clients and advance the aviation industry.

Skyplan is known for its advanced tools and technology. Could you elaborate on some of the proprietary tools and software that enhance operational efficiency for your clients?

Innovation has always been at the heart of what we do. At Skyplan, we are constantly pushing the boundaries to provide smarter, more efficient solutions for flight operations. One of our flagship tools is the Flight Operations Management System, designed to integrate seamlessly across various platforms. It ensures flexibility and adaptability, so our clients have operational continuity no matter their needs. Another standout is our Aurora Flight Planning Solution, which has been a game-changer. Aurora uses advanced algorithms and real-time data to simplify complex flight planning. The intuitive interface isn't just user-friendly—it's powerful. By incorporating real-time weather updates, fuel optimization strategies, and airspace restrictions, Aurora ensures every flight is planned for maximum efficiency and safety. Ultimately, we focus on empowering our clients to work smarter, achieve better results, and minimize time and cost wastage.

Skyplan offers innovative solutions like the Aurora Flight Planning Solution. Could you elaborate on its unique features and how it caters to the specific needs of modern aviation?

Aurora 2.0 was designed with modern aviation professionals in mind. Dispatchers and pilots face demanding and complex tasks daily, so we built Aurora to make their jobs easier and more efficient. Its unique features include seamless integration with third-party systems like aircraft performance software, crew scheduling tools, and EFB systems. It simplifies workflows while maintaining flexibility. What sets Aurora apart is its ability to optimize routes, save fuel, and ensure compliance with international aviation standards. It's not just a planning tool; it's a complete solution that connects all aspects of a flight operation in one cohesive system. This level of integration and ease of use makes Aurora an indispensable tool for flight departments striving for peak performance.

What are the core aspects of Skyplan' s flight planning and flight support services, and how do they ensure operational efficiency and safety for your clients?

Everything we do revolves around precision and reliability. When it comes to flight planning, our services are tailored to the specific requirements of airlines and corporate operators. We make it a point to ensure every flight plan is optimized for safety, efficiency, and compliance. Our Operations Control Center (OCC) is at the heart of our support services. This dedicated team provides real-time operational assistance, allowing our clients to concentrate on their core business. Whether they are flying passengers or cargo, we take care of the details behind the scenes to keep everything running smoothly. Our focus is on simplifying operations and providing peace of mind.

Trip planning and aviation fuel services are vital for seamless operations. How does Skyplan approach these services, and what sets your solutions apart from competitors?

Trip planning and fuel management have been two of our cornerstones from the very beginning. Over the years, we have built a global network of trusted ground handlers and established strong relationships with civil aviation authorities. This ensures that we can handle everything, from securing permits to arranging fuel, with precision and speed. What really sets us apart is that we provide a one-stop solution. Everything our clients need to make a successful trip—from start to finish—is available under one roof. This efficiency saves time, reduces complexity, and ensures the highest level of service. We see our role as not just a service provider but a strategic partner to every client we work with.

Skyplan serves a global market. Which regions are your key focus areas, and how do you tailor your offerings to meet the demands of different markets?

Our focus has always been on regions where aviation is evolving rapidly, such as the Middle East, Asia, and Africa. These areas present unique challenges and opportunities, and we have made it a point to understand the local regulations, requirements, and expectations in every market. The launch of the Skyplan Aviation Academy in Dubai has been a crucial step in addressing the growing

need for specialized training in flight operations in these regions. We are also continually exploring emerging markets, looking for ways to add value with our expertise. By staying attuned to the needs of each region, we have been able to tailor our services and expand our reach effectively.

Collaborating with airlines and airports is crucial in the aviation ecosystem. Can you share details of significant partnerships and how they contribute to Skyplan's growth and service offerings?

Strong partnerships have been central to our success. Over the years, we have worked hand-in-hand with airlines, airports, and other service providers worldwide to ensure smooth and seamless operations. One example would be our collaboration with ground handlers and airports, where we have set up flexible agreements that ensure flights always run like clockwork. Similarly, our close relationships with fuel suppliers mean we can offer competitive pricing to our clients, which helps them manage costs more efficiently. These collaborations allow us to scale our operations and provide customized solutions that meet a wide variety of needs across the aviation community.

What are some of the key challenges facing the aviation industry today, and how is Skyplan adapting to address these challenges while leveraging emerging opportunities?

The aviation industry is no stranger to challenges. Rising costs, sustainability pressures, and regulatory shifts have made it more complex than ever. But each challenge also presents an opportunity. At Skyplan, we are addressing these issues head-on by developing cost-efficient tools, exploring sustainable energy options, and leveraging data analytics to anticipate and solve problems before they arise. For instance, using advanced analytics helps us maintain efficiency while also ensuring compliance with evolving regulations. We are also investing heavily in new technology and processes, all while supporting our clients through these changes. The goal, as always, is to help our clients stay ahead while securing a brighter future for aviation.

Skyplan emphasizes customer satisfaction. Can you

provide insights into how your team ensures personalized and efficient service for clients across different segments?

Customer satisfaction is at the core of everything we do. We understand that every client has unique needs, so we don't offer one-size-fits-all solutions. Instead, we work closely with our clients to create tailored strategies and solutions that address their specific challenges. Whether it's through 24/7 real-time assistance, custom flight planning, or resolving operational hiccups on the fly, our team is dedicated to going above and beyond. The long-term relationships we have built with our clients are a testament to the value of this personalized approach—it's what keeps them coming back to us, time and again.

What is Skyplan' s vision for the next 5–7 years, particularly in terms of technological advancements, market expansion, and new product development?

Looking ahead, innovation and sustainability will continue to drive our vision. We are working on next-generation tools that utilize AI and machine learning to redefine flight operations. On the market side, we are deepening our foothold in key regions while continually exploring new markets to grow our reach. We are also dedicated to integrating environmentally friendly solutions into our services as part of the industry's broader push towards sustainability. Ultimately, our vision is to lead the charge in aviation innovation while remaining the dependable partner our clients know and trust. With continuous investments in technology, partnerships, and sustainability, Skyplan is ready to meet whatever the future holds head-on.

SKYPLAN ACADEMY

What is the mission behind Skyplan Academy, and how does it aim to contribute to the professional development of individuals in the aviation sector?

At Skyplan Academy, our mission is to empower flight dispatchers with the skills, knowledge, and confidence they need to excel in the aviation industry. Whether they are working with scheduled airlines or charter operations, we ensure our graduates are prepared to handle a diverse range of aircraft, regions, and operational scenarios seamlessly. We believe that no one should feel unprepared when stepping into the demanding roles of the real world.

Having experienced the challenges of transitioning from training to practice firsthand, I understand how critical it is to bridge that gap effectively. That is why we emphasize practical, hands-on learning in all our programs. Our curriculum is designed not only to meet but to exceed global standards, including those set by GCAA and ICAO. Whether someone is entering the flight dispatch profession for the first time or seeking to enhance their expertise, we provide them with the tools to navigate the dynamic challenges of the industry. Ultimately, our goal is to help our graduates elevate their careers while contributing to the professionalism and safety of the aviation sector as a whole.

Could you describe the key training programs and certifications offered at Skyplan Academy? How do these align with current industry standards and demands?

Skyplan Academy offers a range of training programs tailored to the practical needs of the aviation industry. One of our flagship courses is the Flight Dispatch Initial Course, which includes essential on-the-job training on Skyplan's integrated live systems. This hands-on experience is invaluable, as it allows students to apply their knowledge in real-world environments, preparing them for the demands they'll face in their roles. We also offer the Flight Dispatch Recurrent Course, which is designed to help professionals refine their skills and stay current with industry developments.

In addition to these core programs, we provide customized corporate training solutions for airlines, FBOs, and corporate operators. These tailored programs ensure that the training aligns with the specific operational needs of each organization. All our courses are developed in compliance with GCAA and ICAO standards, but we go beyond mere regulatory adherence. Our curriculum is continuously updated to reflect the latest industry regulations, technologies, and best practices. This ensures that our graduates are not only compliant but also equipped to excel in a competitive and ever-evolving industry.

How does Skyplan Academy cater to a global audience, and what efforts are being made to attract and train talent from diverse regions?

Skyplan Academy is uniquely positioned to serve a global audience, thanks to our current location in Dubai, one of the world's leading aviation hubs. Over the years, we have had the privilege of training students from diverse regions, including Asia, Africa, the Middle East, and Europe. For example, one of our students from Africa joined us with limited exposure to advanced dispatch systems. By the time he completed his training, he not only passed his certification with flying colors but also secured a position with a prominent airline in his home country. Stories like this inspire us to continue delivering excellence.

To attract and support talent from diverse regions, we have designed our programs to be flexible and inclusive. We partner with airlines, civil aviation authorities, and educational institutions worldwide to ensure our training is accessible and relevant. Our compliance with GCAA and ICAO standards and other regulatory bodies also means that our certifications are internationally recognized, opening doors for our graduates wherever their careers take them.

Additionally, we offer flexible learning options, including in-person workshops and hybrid programs, to accommodate the varying needs and schedules of our students. Combined with our state-of-the-art facilities and welcoming environment, Skyplan Academy has become a global hub where aviation professionals can grow, thrive, and contribute to the future of the industry.

Aviation Guide™ EMERGING MARKETS Year Book 2025

Middle East ✈ Africa ✈ South Asia

Break-throughs

Explore the cutting-edge advancements that are reshaping the aviation landscape, driving innovation, and pushing the boundaries of aerospace technology. From sustainable propulsion systems to revolutionary air traffic management solutions, we bring you to the forefront of aviation breakthroughs.

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Whatever you see in the world is
FROM İSTANBUL
Nairobi
İstanbul
Tokyo
More than 2 million tons of cargo is transported to the world from SMARTIST annually with Turkish Cargo, the air cargo brand that flies to the most destinations in the world.
SMART IST
LOGISTICS CENTER OF THE WORLD
TURKISH CARGO
SMART IST

ATR
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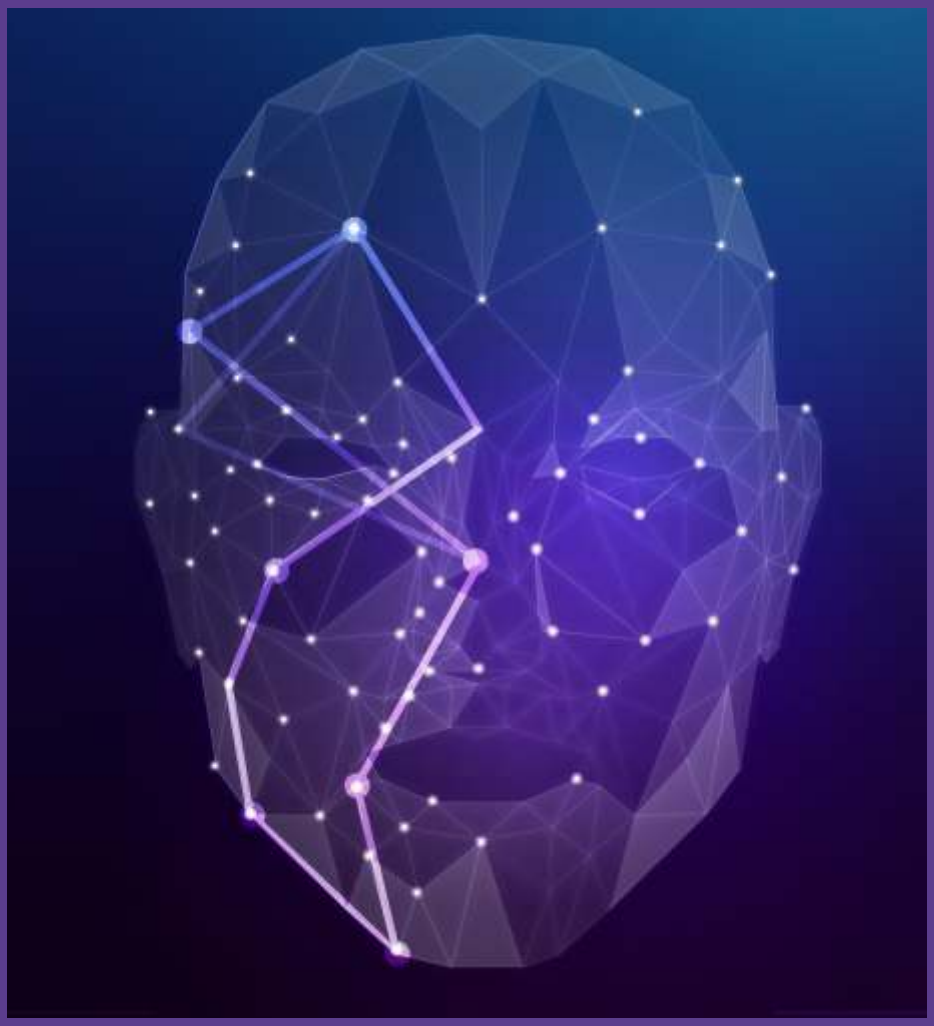
Biometrics and AI:

The Future of Airport Security



Ever wondered how biometrics and AI are transforming airport security? Dive into our latest interview with Michal Vilagi, Business Unit Director of SmartFace, where he shares insights on how these technologies are enhancing passenger safety and streamlining the travel experience.

By Ayesha Rashid

As you step into an airport, you're surrounded by a complex web of security measures designed to keep you safe. From metal detectors to ID checks, each layer is crucial to preventing threats. But what if you could add an extra layer of protection that's both efficient and accurate?

That's where biometrics and AI come in.

Air travel has become increasingly popular, but it also poses unique security risks.

In an airport, thousands of people from diverse backgrounds converge, creating a potential hotbed for security threats.

In the event of a security breach, the consequences can be devastating.

Assuring passengers' safety, the airport staff, visitors, as well as the safety of the airport infrastructure and the establishments around it is a delicate trade-off between facilitating smooth travel and ensuring people's safety.

There is a constant evolution in the security landscape, with new threats emerging or adapting to avoid detection.

A global pandemic has also contributed to an increase in contactless technologies in different industries, including aviation.

Various airport touchpoints across the globe are now adopting solutions to reduce physical contact between passengers and staff.

As a result, viruses are less likely to spread and passengers have a better experience.

Market Size Trend

Global airport biometric service market is estimated to be valued at $116.52 billion in 2024 and is expected to reach $245.36 billion by 2031, exhibiting a compound annual growth rate (CAGR) of 11.2% from 2024 to 2031.

Several factors are driving this surge, including:

- Biometric innovations such as facial recognition, fingerprint scanning and iris recognition have enhanced airport security and improved passenger experience.
- Increased security concerns are causing airports to adopt more secure and efficient identification systems, especially in post-pandemic eras.
- Streamlining processes such as check-in and boarding with biometrics reduces wait times for passengers and enhances their overall travel experience.
- Governments and regulatory bodies are promoting biometric systems in order to ensure air travel safety and efficiency.

Michal Vilagi, SmartFace's Business Unit Director, recently discussed how biometrics and AI are set to transform airport security.

As a result of these innovative technologies, he believes that airports could improve passenger safety significantly.

As part of this interview with Aviation Guide, he will also discuss how biometrics and artificial intelligence are impacting airport security.

Current Vulnerabilities

Airport security still relies heavily on traditional methods like metal detectors, X-ray scanners, and manual identity verification.

While these measures have their place, they are not foolproof and can be compromised by sophisticated threats.

Security checkpoints are a weak link in the security chain.

Long queues and crowded areas create an environment where threats can easily blend in. Moreover, human error and fatigue can lead to mistakes, allowing potential threats to slip through.

Security protocols often focus on reacting to threats rather than proactively preventing them.

Vilagi emphasizes, “The critical part of security at the airport is making sure that people are who they say they are – the staff, the contractors and the passengers. While we usually use IDs and passports, the visual check is extremely unreliable for spotting

ID fraud. The officers are able to spot only 50 to 70 percent of ID fraud attempts. Biometrics, whether based on IDs or previous enrolment (such as eVisa application) is almost 100 percent accurate. With the use of combination of e.g. face and fingerprint or fingerprint and iris recognition the accuracy is basically perfect."

He underscored that traditional methods often fall short in detecting ID fraud, leaving airports vulnerable to security breaches.

This is where biometrics comes in – by providing an additional layer of verification, airports can significantly reduce the risk of fraudulent activity.

Current Biometric Technologies in Airport Security

Facial Recognition via e-Gates and NFC Chips:

- Enhances airport security.
- A facial recognition system is used for quick border control at e-gates.
- Passports and ID cards with NFC chips allow seamless identification.
- Reducing wait times and increasing efficiency.
- A vital tool in the fight against terrorism and organized crime.

Fingerprints Linked to Visa Applications and Criminal Databases:

- A criminal database is linked to visa applications.
- Rapidly identifies potential security risks.
- Reduces illegal activity and terrorist threats.
- Ensures greater security by cross-checking fingerprints during travel.

Iris Recognition Technology:

- Verification of identity is highly accurate and reliable.
- Suitable for high-traffic areas such as airport terminals.
- Security checkpoints can be verified quickly.
- Databases that are designed for rapid identification and verification.
- Adds additional protection against threats.

"Facial recognition remains one of the most traditional methods. Automated e-Gates read NFC chips on passports and compare the stored photographs with actual selfies. This is extremely accurate, although it can be time-consuming depending on the technology and user interface to correctly guide the users.

"Another traditional method is fingerprints, often used in conjunction with visa applications. Fingerprints are already extremely accurate and

very difficult to spoof. Moreover, the international standard ensures that you can compare fingerprints from a wide array of databases – for example, Interpol and Europol share fingerprints of known criminals and fugitives.

"The newest, albeit more expensive, biometric modality is iris recognition. Its accuracy is comparable to fingerprints and cannot be changed, unlike facial features. The technology already exists to capture irises in airport conditions. Some countries use it for the registration of entry and exit, paving the way for the automation of the entry/exit procedure," explains Vilagi.

Balancing Security Needs and Passenger Privacy

When implementing biometric systems in airports, ensuring compliance with the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) is essential.

This involves:

- Transparency: Clearly communicating how personal data is collected and used. Passengers must understand the data practices of the systems they interact with.
- Explicit Consent: Obtaining clear permission from passengers before processing their biometric data.
- Robust Security Measures: Implementing strong safeguards against potential data breaches to protect passenger information.

Vilagi emphasizes that compliance is not just about regulations; it's about building trust with passengers.

Another significant concern in biometric technology is passenger privacy.

Innovations such as e-Gates that don't upload personal data to central databases use anonymous tokens to verify identities, which helps maintain privacy while ensuring security.

Vilagi states, "This really depends on the providers of identification systems at the airport, but a biometric technology is GDPR-compliant if implemented correctly. The data can be stored for limited time in accordance with the law (e.g. camera footage) and some of the systems are designed for privacy. E.g. eGates compare only passport-stored photograph with selfie – no data needs to be uploaded or

downloaded to the servers, only the fact that verified passenger has passed a specific gate."

To build trust, transparency in data handling is crucial. Vilagi asserts that transparency fosters trust, ensuring passengers feel confident in biometric technology.

Multimodal Biometrics

Multi-modal biometrics improve airport security by combining two or more biometric identification methods, such as facial recognition, fingerprint scanning, and iris recognition. This approach enhances accuracy and reduces the risk of fraud.

Key Points:

- Improved Security: Vilagi highlights that multimodal systems offer greater security and reliability compared to single-modal systems. They are less susceptible to spoofing attacks.
- Two-Factor Authentication: By using multiple biometric modalities, airports can verify a passenger's identity more robustly. For example, a passenger could be initially identified through facial recognition, followed by fingerprint or iris verification, significantly enhancing security.
- Widespread Adoption: Approximately 70% of airports globally are implementing biometric technologies, including multi-modal systems, to bolster security and improve passenger experience. For instance, some airports are integrating facial recognition with fingerprint checks at security checkpoints.

· Impact on Fraud Reduction: The implementation of multi-modal biometrics has led to a notable decrease in fraud and security breaches, offering a more secure and efficient way to confirm passenger identities.

Among the various security measures available, biometrics stands out as a superior option compared to traditional two-factor authentication.

Here's a breakdown of how biometrics compares to two-factor authentication:

Biometrics	Two-Factor Authentication
Highly secure and difficult to replicate	Vulnerable to phishing and social engineering attacks.
Convenient and easy to use	Requires users to remember passwords and PINs.
Cannot be lost or stolen	Physical tokens can be lost or stolen.

"Using a combination of biometric modalities—like facial recognition with fingerprints or iris scans—ensures that only verified individuals can access secure areas, effectively guarding against impersonation attempts. For example, even if someone tries to disguise themselves with a mask, their unique fingerprints will reveal their true identity.

"This layered approach is reminiscent of two-factor authentication in online banking, where you need both the password and access to your phone to log in. Just as these security measures protect your finances, multi-modal biometrics enhance airport security, providing a robust defense against fraud and ensuring that only the right people get through."

AI-Powered Biometrics

Biometric technology is becoming a regular part of our daily routines.

From using facial recognition to unlock our phones to scanning our fingerprints to log into our computers, we're getting more and more used to these tech advancements.

This growing familiarity is crucial for acceptance, especially in high-security areas like airports.

The more we use biometrics, the more we trust technology, which helps pave the way for broader adoption.

Airports are typically high-stress environments, which can make people hesitant about new security measures.

However, airports also serve as perfect places to showcase how biometric technology can improve safety and streamline the travel experience.

When we see the benefits, like shorter waiting times and enhanced security, we're more likely to embrace these changes.

AI combined with biometrics is transforming airport operations.

These technologies can quickly and accurately process vast amounts of data to identify security risks in real-time.

For instance, AI can detect unattended baggage or suspicious behavior, allowing security staff to respond swiftly.

For biometric technologies to be widely accepted, transparency is key. Airports, airlines, and governments must clearly communicate how biometric data is used, stored, and protected.

"Airports are unique environments where heightened security is expected, leading people to accept additional precautions. Much of the acceptance of biometric technology stems from its widespread use in everyday devices like smartphones and computers, fostering familiarity and reducing fear.

"Furthermore, the integration of AI with biometric systems enhances operational efficiency by analyzing vast amounts of data to identify discrepancies, suspicious behavior, and unattended baggage. AI also helps recognize bottlenecks and potential security flaws, making airports safer and more efficient."

The Future of Biometric Technology in Airports

Experts predict that biometric technology will continue to be crucial in enhancing airport security.

With advancements in AI, machine learning, and deep learning, biometric technology is becoming more sophisticated, enabling airports to provide a personalized and secure passenger experience.

In the near future, widespread adoption of biometric technology in airports worldwide is expected.

Vilagi notes, "Airports are looking for ways to improve the passenger experience while

maintaining the highest level of security. Biometric technology offers a solution that can achieve both goals simultaneously."

Around the world, airports are investing heavily in AI-powered biometric systems to enhance security and streamline passenger processing.

These systems use machine learning algorithms to analyze data, enabling real-time identification and authentication of passengers.

Vilagi explains, "The integration of AI with biometric technology has the potential to revolutionize airport security. By leveraging machine learning, we can identify potential security threats more accurately and respond quickly to emerging risks."

In the coming years, significant advancements in seamless biometric-based security systems are expected.

Airports will adopt more sophisticated AI-powered biometric solutions, enabling faster and more accurate passenger processing, leading to increased efficiency, reduced wait times, and enhanced security.

Vilagi adds, "We can already see airports testing various biometrics-based seamless setups such as tunnels."

For instance, Introduced in 2018, Dubai International Airport has implemented an innovative "Smart Tunnel" that allows passengers to pass through immigration controls without the need for a physical passport or human interaction. This system uses biometric technology to clear travelers as they walk through the tunnel

Other airports, like Changi Airport in Singapore, have also been exploring similar technologies to enhance the passenger experience by reducing queuing times and streamlining the boarding process

Moreover, Abu Dhabi's Zayed International Airport is progressing towards fully biometric operations, aiming to eliminate the need for physical travel documents by 2025.

This initiative, known as the "Smart Travel" project, intends to equip all identification checkpoints with biometric sensors, facilitating a seamless and efficient travel experience

Biometric-based security systems are poised to become the norm in airports worldwide.

Vilagi predicts, "In the next 5-10 years, we'll see widespread adoption of biometric screening, increased automation, and significant operational savings for airports."

This shift will be driven by advances in AI, machine learning, and deep learning, enabling faster, more accurate, and more efficient security screening.

He continues, "The future of airport security is all about leveraging technology to provide a better experience for passengers while maintaining the highest level of security."

When asked which will dominate the aviation industry—AI, Big Data, or IoT—the response was insightful.

"The combination of all three will probably be the most important," he said. "The ability to analyze large amounts of data from different sources and quickly spot discrepancies is something that these technologies are really good at."

Vilagi further emphasized that human involvement remains crucial.

"It will still need humans to properly execute. So, while AI, Big Data, and IoT are powerful tools, their true potential is unlocked only when paired with human expertise and execution."

Introducing SmartFace: The future of airport security

SmartFace algorithms excel in "wild" conditions like real-world CCTV footage, making them ideal for airport security.

"SmartFace is tuned to be fast and accurate, making it a vital tool in airports," says Vilagi.

SmartFace integrates multiple camera streams using embedded specialized devices that handle most biometric tasks, significantly reducing bandwidth needs by over 90 percent.

"Our cooperation with chip makers allows us to optimize their chips for biometrics. It can manage watchlists to identify known criminals or missing persons in under a second, even from lists of hundreds of thousands."

Combining SmartFace with ABIS, a biometric database, ensures that airports can efficiently spot individuals from the database while SmartFace handles real-time identification.

Vilagi explains, "ABIS pulls the information, and SmartFace ensures we spot the people at the airport."

Together, they enhance security by providing a seamless, efficient, and highly accurate identification system.

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UAE Marks Historic Launch of MBZ-SAT the Region's Most Advanced Satellite

UAE Strengthens Its Position in Space Innovation with the Successful Launch of MBZ-SAT, the Region's Most Advanced Satellite"

By Laique Khan

The launch was witnessed by His Highness Sheikh Mohammed bin Rashid bin Mohammed bin Rashid Al Maktoum at the Mission Control Centre at the Mohammed Bin Rashid Space Centre (MBRSC).

The Mohammed Bin Rashid Space Center (MBRS) has successfully launched MBZ-SAT, the most advanced satellite in the region, named in honor of His Highness Sheikh Mohamed bin Zayed Al Nahyan, President of the UAE.

MBZ-SAT was launched aboard SpaceX's Falcon 9 rocket from the Space Launch Complex 4E (SLC-4E) at Vandenberg Space Force Base in California, USA, on January 14 at 11:09 PM (UAE time)

MBZ-SAT marks a significant milestone in the UAE's satellite development journey, having been fully developed entirely by Emirati engineers at MBRSC. Named in honor of HH Sheikh Mohamed bin Zayed Al Nahyan, President of the UAE, the satellite was announced in 2020 by His Highness Sheikh Mohammed bin Rashid Al Maktoum, Vice President and Prime Minister of the UAE, and Ruler of Dubai. The satellite was officially approved for launch last year by His Highness Sheikh Hamdan bin Mohammed bin Rashid Al Maktoum, Crown Prince of Dubai, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Defence of the UAE and President of MBRSC.

Weighing 750 kg with dimensions of 3m x 5m, MBZ-SAT represents a significant advancement in Earth observation technology. The satellite's technical specifications demonstrate substantial improvements across all systems. Its imaging system also consists of one of the highest resolution cameras with improved data transmission rates – four times faster than existing systems. It is also equipped with an advanced electric jet propulsion system, a navigation system accurate to one metre, and a star tracking system that allows for unparalleled precision in positioning capabilities. These capabilities position MBZ-SAT as a significant advancement in Earth observation technology, providing valuable data for both research and practical applications.

The satellite will be able to capture images with double the precision of previous models while increasing image generation capacity tenfold. This improvement comes from its integrated scheduling and processing system, which can deliver processed images within two hours of capture. The satellite will serve multiple functions, including supporting environmental monitoring, infrastructure management, and disaster relief. These features allow local and international entities to make informed decisions based on current, accurate data.

The satellite will be operated and managed by the Mission Control Centre at MBRSC, with specialized teams handling operations and analyzing the data transmitted to Earth.

> Talal Humaid Belhoul Al Falasi, Vice President, MBRSC, said, "We extend our deepest gratitude to our leadership for their unwavering support and vision, which have been instrumental in achieving this milestone. We are proud to announce yet another successful mission that is the launch of MBZ-SAT, which has given a positive start to a busy and promising year at MBRSC. I extend my heartfelt congratulations to the entire team at MBRSC whose dedication, expertise, and hard work have made this milestone possible. This achievement is more than a testament to our capabilities—it is a signal of what lies ahead for the UAE in the realm of space exploration. Each mission builds on the last, paving the way for groundbreaking advancements and cementing the UAE's role as a leader in shaping the future of space science and technology."

Boosting industries

MBZ-SAT has boosted the UAE's economic growth through collaboration with local industries. Local manufacturing played a crucial role, with UAE companies producing 90% of the satellite's mechanical structures and a significant portion of the electronic components. Companies like Strata, EPI, Rockford Xellerix, Halcon, Falcon, and EGA contributed their expertise to various aspects of the satellite's construction. This collaborative approach has strengthened the UAE's space technology capabilities while transferring vital knowledge and skills to local talent—ensuring the nation maintains its competitive edge in global space exploration.

Hamad Obaid AlMansoori, Chairman, MBRSC, said, "Under the guidance of our leadership, we have succeeded in launching MBZ-SAT. This historic accomplishment demonstrates the UAE's advancement in space technology and reinforces our position as a global leader in the sector. The achievement also underscores our commitment to elevating the nation's standing in the international space arena, while showcasing the collective expertise of Emiratis who are dedicated to realizing our leadership's ambitious vision. We will continue working on missions to enhance our space capabilities, advancing the leadership's strategic objective of establishing the UAE as a pioneering force in space exploration and technological innovation."

Salem Humaid AlMarri, Director General, MBRSC said, "We are grateful to our leadership for their steadfast support and strategic vision, which have been instrumental in achieving this milestone. The launch of MBZ-SAT represents a pivotal moment in the UAE's space sector development, showcasing our nation's exceptional capabilities and technological prowess.

Engineered to meet the most rigorous international standards, with substantial participation from local entities in the UAE, this satellite exemplifies our strategic commitment to pioneering global innovation. Beyond its technical significance, MBZ-SAT serves as a catalyst for developing cutting-edge technological solutions that elevate quality of life whilst advancing our ambitious vision of contributing to global progress."

Amer AlSayegh AlGhaferi, Project Manager, MBZ-SAT, said, "MBZ-SAT is a result of the exceptional collaborative achievement of our Emirati team, who have demonstrated remarkable dedication and expertise throughout this strategic national initiative, working seamlessly with local industry partners. At MBRSC, we are confident that this advanced satellite will revolutionize crucial domains including environmental surveillance, infrastructure optimization and emergency response capabilities. Moreover, it represents a significant advancement in our mission to harness cutting-edge space technologies for social benefit, reinforcing our strategic commitment to delivering innovative solutions that drive sustainable development and enhance global prosperity."

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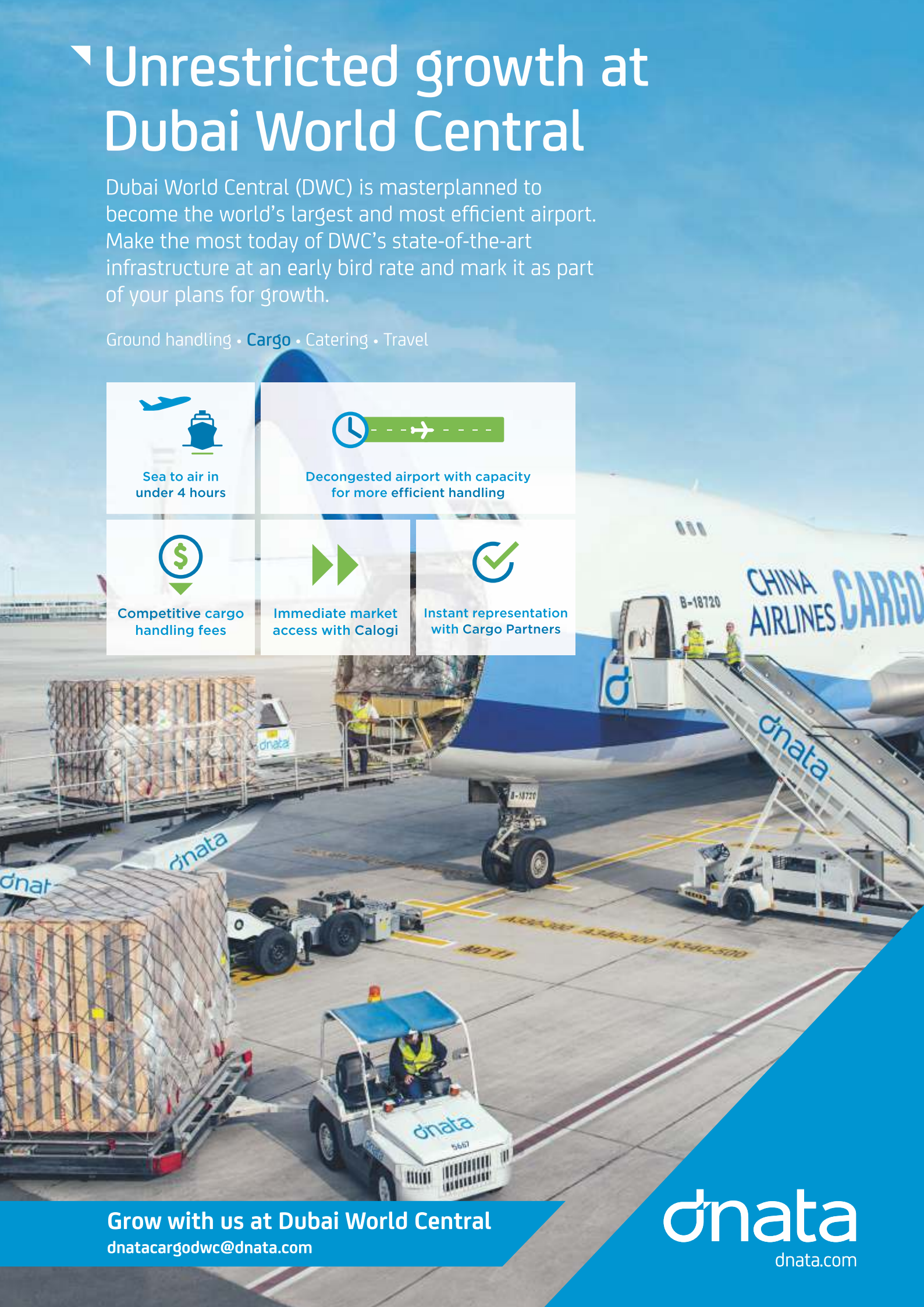

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Building Tomorrow:
The Synergy of AI, Blockchain, IoT and Big Data

By Harshad Hussain B

Blockchain technology is still unknown for many but is making significant strides in aviation in bringing security, transparency and efficiency. The blockchain in aviation market is expected to grow at an astounding 20% CAGR by 2027 potentially reaching $1.3 billion.

The Aviation world is on the cusp of technological renaissance with innovations like AI, Blockchain, IoT, and Big Data in unimaginable scale. It isn't just about getting cargo or passengers from point A to B anymore; it's about making the whole process more operationally efficient, safe and enhance overall customer experience.

Let's deep dive into how these technologies are changing the sphere of aviation, their challenges in implementation and comprehensive analysis of their impact in the sector.

Artificial Intelligence

AI is disrupting aviation and becoming a foundational element in the aviation sector at a rapid pace. The Market Research Future data says, the AI in aviation market is projected to grow at an astounding 45% CAGR from 2021 to 2028, potentially reaching around $2.5 billion by 2028.

Key Applications of AI:

- Predictive Maintenance: Data generated by aircraft sensors is crucial in avoiding delay and maintaining strict timelines. By implementing AI based predictive maintenance into their systems, airlines can reduce delays by 20% through timely repairs and maintenance. Tools like IBM Maximo and GE Predix can enhance the process of facilitating real-time data analysis.
- Customer Service: The deployment of AI-powered chatbots can simplify customer service operations and drastically improve response times. Tools such as Zendesk and LivePerson are commonly used in this area in handling customer queries.
- Operational Optimization: AI powered algorithms can optimize flight schedule and routes more efficiently than the conventional systems because of real-time data tracking. Tools like Sabre AirCentre and Amadeus Revenue Management are some key players in this area.

Challenges in Implementation:

Despite the promising advantages of implementing AI, several challenges remain to be addressed in the years to come. The vast amount of passenger data collection and its utilization can have some serious privacy issues, and the compliance with regulatory bodies such as General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) is complex as the frame work has its own limitations which requires airlines to implement strict data governance frameworks. AI implementation into the systems necessitates significant investment in infrastructure and AI talent, which sometimes can be a barrier for budgeted airlines. AI algorithms sometimes can inadvertently perpetuate biases as these are based on trained data, potentially resulting in unfair outcomes during operations. To minimize these risks, it is essential to train AI models using diverse and inclusive datasets.

Blockchain

Blockchain technology is still unknown for many but is making significant strides in aviation in bringing security, transparency and efficiency. The blockchain in aviation market is expected to grow at an astounding 20% CAGR by 2027 potentially reaching $1.3 billion.

Key Applications of Blockchain:

- Secure Transactions: Smart contracts in blockchain can bring great transparency in reducing the fraud risks and streamline the ticketing process. Blockchain is a transparent and immutable ledger that enables real-time tracking with highly reliable data. When integrated into baggage systems, it can significantly reduce the occurrence of lost luggage. Passengers can monitor their baggage in real time, minimizing the risk of mishandling.
- Maintenance Records Management: Blockchain technology can ensure smooth flow of maintenance records and can provide immutable history of every aircraft part. It can bring greater transparency into compliance and safety standards and time spent on maintaining audit records can be drastically reduced.
- Regulatory Compliance: Smart contracts simplify the process of tracking each and every detail with timestamps to meet regulatory compliance, making it easier for airline companies to adhere to safety and security standards.

Challenges in Implementation:

The legal status of implementing blockchain technology is complex and varies across jurisdictions, navigating an uncertain and underdeveloped regulatory landscape that limits its adoption by airlines. While blockchain offers potential benefits, concerns remain about its ability to manage large transactions. Establishing industry-wide standards and frameworks is essential for seamless data sharing among stakeholders, but the interoperability between multiple protocols is still in its early stages.

Internet of Things (IoT)

The IoT is revolutionizing how airlines monitor overall performance of aircraft and its engagement with the passengers. The scope for IoT in aviation sector is projected to grow at a 29% CAGR and potentially reaching $10 billion by 2026.

Key Applications of IoT in Aviation:

- Real-Time Monitoring: IoT sensors can be integrated into aircraft systems to optimize critical parameters like temperature, pressure, and overall engine performance. Real-time monitoring tools, such as Honeywell GoDirect and GE Aviation's Digital Solutions, can streamline this process effectively.
- Smart Baggage Solutions: The implementation of IoT into baggage systems can streamline the flow and allow passengers to track their baggage in real-time through IoT enabled mobile applications resulting in decreased luggage mishandling rates and enhance passenger satisfaction.
- Enhanced Passenger Experience: Implementing IoT into in-flight systems can provide personalized services tailored to individual passenger preferences, with surveys indicating a 30% increase in passenger satisfaction due to these customized experiences. Solutions like SITA's Airport Management Initiative demonstrate how IoT applications can enhance overall passenger services.

Challenges in Implementation:

Implementing IoT in aviation presents several challenges as the domain is still in its early stages. The IoT device infrastructure is evolving, and managing the vast amounts of data generated by these devices remains a significant hurdle. Additionally, IoT devices are susceptible to hacking, and the cost of these devices is relatively high in the current phase. There is also a shortage of skilled professionals who can bridge the gap between IoT and aviation infrastructure. As the domain matures, implementing robust cybersecurity measures will help mitigate data breach risks and ensure compliance with regulatory bodies. Furthermore, comprehensive training for both IoT and aviation personnel is crucial for successfully integrating new technologies with existing infrastructure.

Big Data

Big Data analytics is increasingly essential, not only in various industries but also in aviation. It plays a key role in decision-making and strategic planning within the sector. The market for Big Data in aviation is expected to grow at a CAGR of 19%, potentially reaching $5 billion by 2026.

Key applications of Big Data in Aviation:

- Customer Insights: Airlines can make use of Big Data analytics to gain insights about customer behavioral and preferences. This data driven approach tailored to individual travel preferences can address customer query resolution much quicker than conventional way and enhance overall customer satisfaction. Tableau is consistent in building tools that are widely used today for customer data analytics.
- Operational Analytics: Forecasting demand fluctuations accurately is crucial in aviation industry as everything works on a strict timeline. Big Data technologies can aggregate data from various sources such as aircraft maintenance logs, passenger data and weather conditions into a single platform enabling comprehensive analysis of the data allowing airlines to make quick decisions during operations.
- Market Analysis: Big Data implementation can analyze and predict market trends and customer feedback to make well informed decisions about new routes, various services and partnerships. Big Data analytics also helps to monitor carbon footprint in real-time, aligning with regulatory frameworks and public interests.

Challenges in Implementation:

The aviation industry is highly regulated, and safeguarding sensitive passenger information and operational data is crucial. Compliance with regulatory bodies like the FAA and GDPR is essential. Cybersecurity threats present significant risks, often reaching unmanageable levels due to constant updates in the sector. Additionally, setting up, maintaining, and scaling Big Data infrastructure can be costly, compounded by a persistent shortage of skilled professionals such as data scientists and Big Data engineers. Addressing these challenges requires a robust, strategic approach, as the world shifts toward a fully data-driven landscape. Collaborative efforts will be key to achieving sustainable growth.

Conclusion

The convergence of AI, Blockchain, IoT, and Big Data is more than just an evolving trend; together, these technologies are paving the way for a transformative shift in sectors such as healthcare, finance, agriculture, and transportation, reaching unprecedented levels of advancement. They have the potential to become key growth drivers and lay the foundation for remarkable future growth. As these technologies mature, it will be essential for businesses seeking a competitive edge to embrace them. Looking forward, leveraging these advancements will be critical to shaping a smarter, more connected future that benefits society in every possible way.

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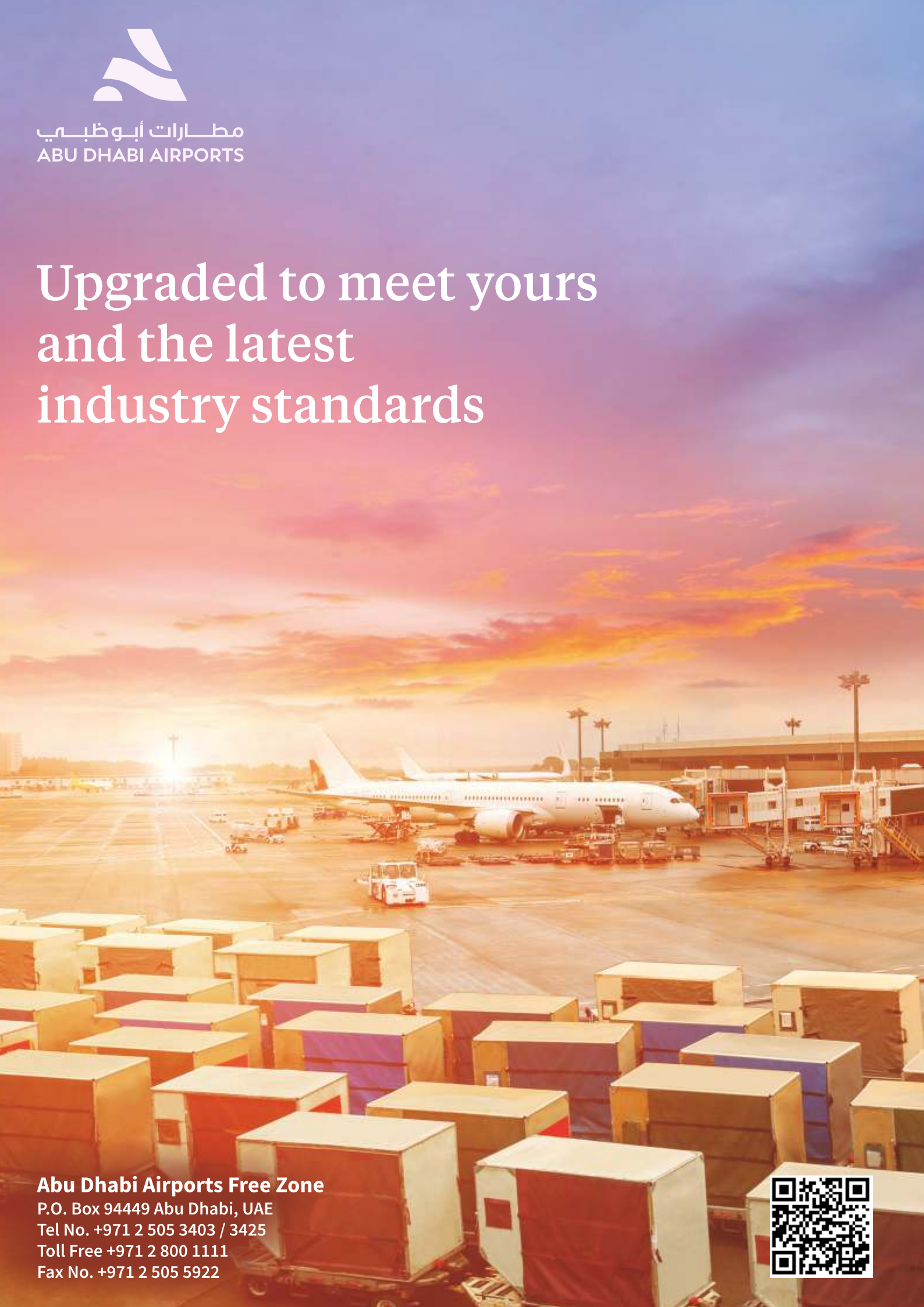

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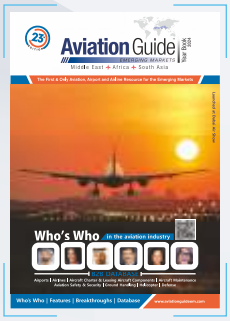

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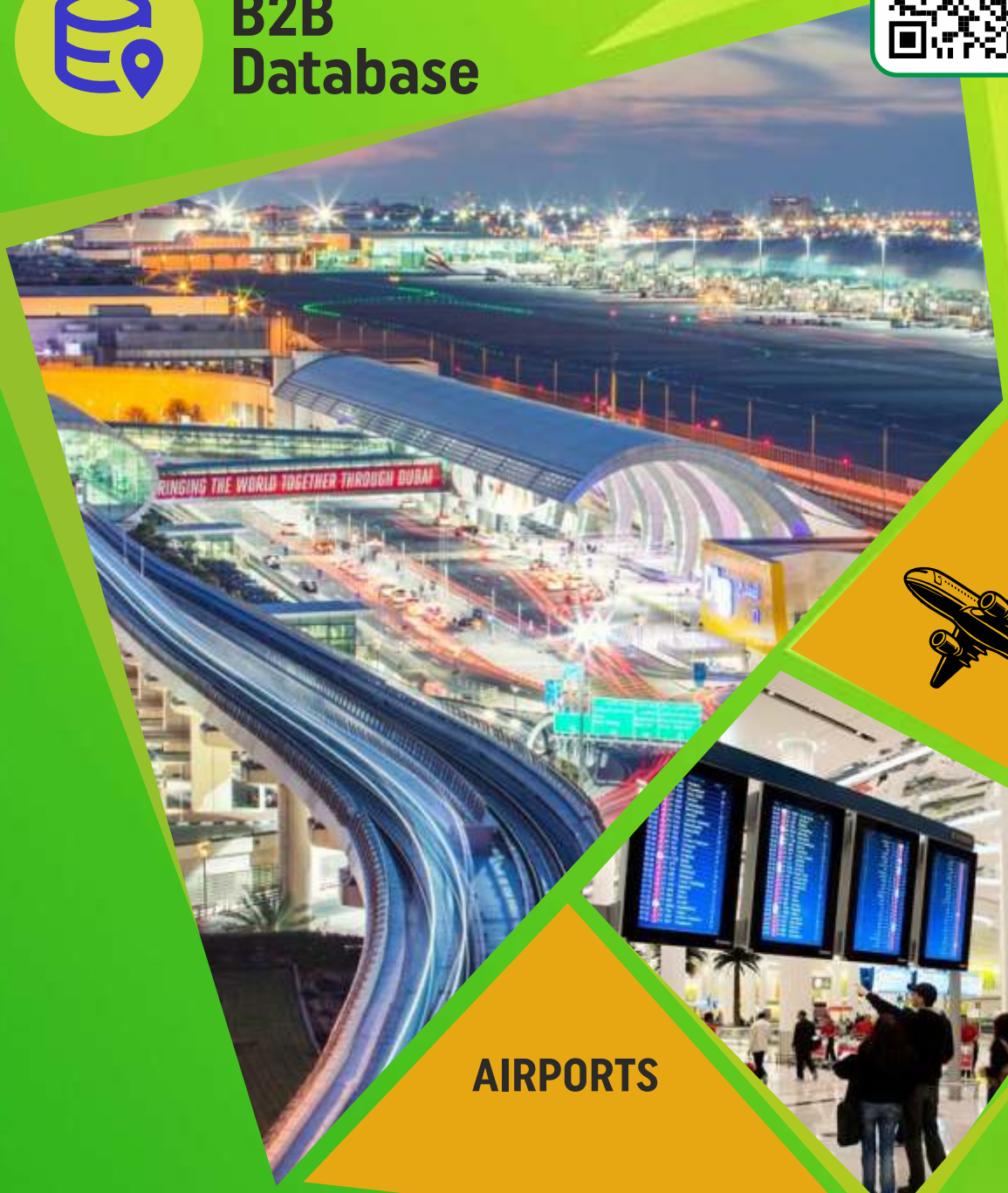

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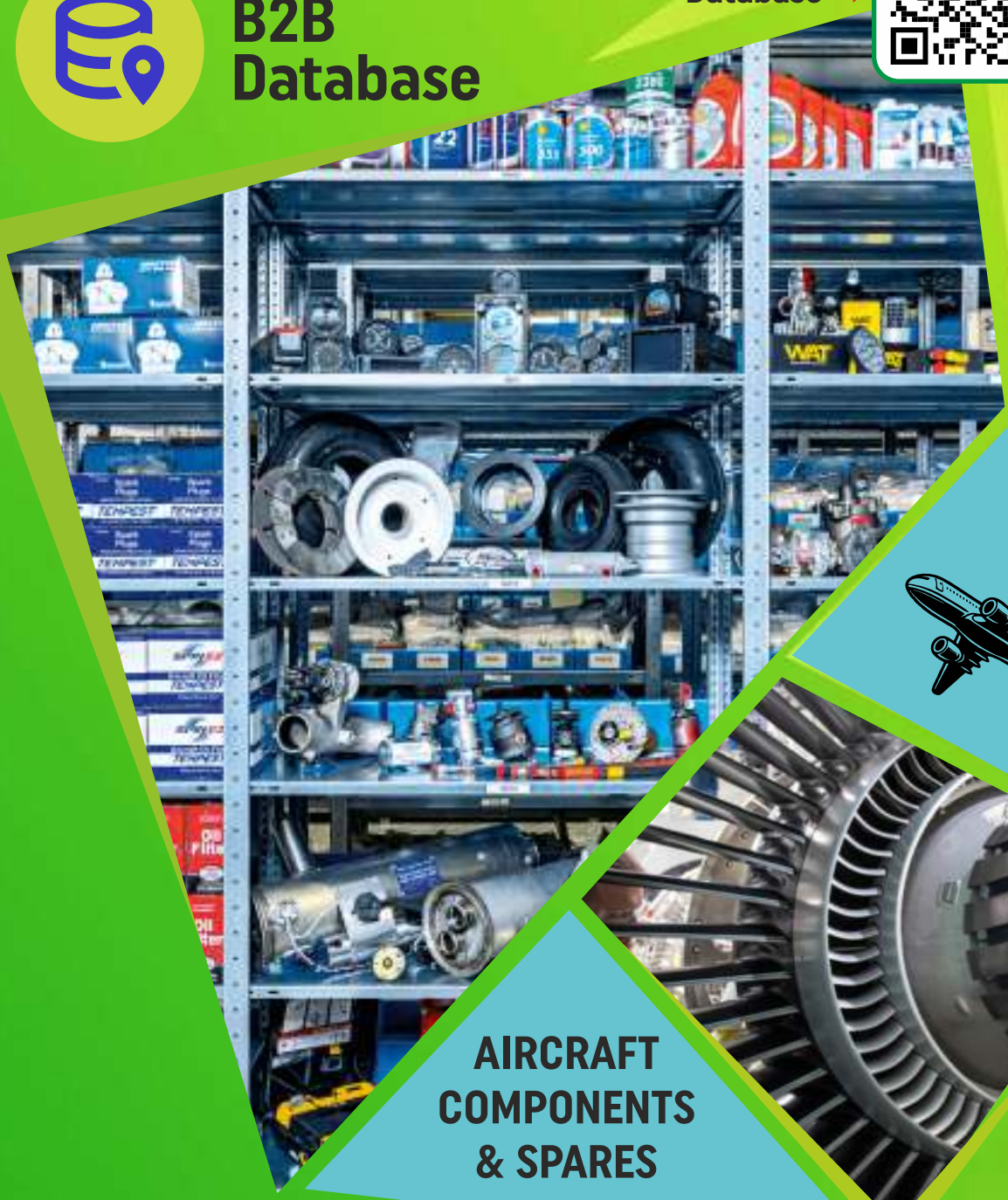

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Fax: +971 4 883 83 52
E-mail: info.ae@dabico.com
Web site: www.dabico.com
Managing Director: Mr. Juergen Strommer

Activities
Aviation: Global Manufacturer of Aircraft 400Hz Power System, Pre-Condition Air (PCA) System, Technical Pits System (Pop-Up and Hatch Type); designer and systems integrator of specialized apron services equipment providing air, fuel, power and water to Aircraft.

B2B Database

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AIRCRAFT MAINTENANCE, REPAIR, ENGINEERING

- AIRCRAFT ENGINEERING/ SUPPLIES
- CHARTER SERVICES
  GROUND HANDLING
- FUEL, FLEET MANAGEMENT
- COATING-PROTECTIVE/WEAR RESISTANT

AIRCRAFT ENGINEERING/ SUPPLIES

CHARTER SERVICES GROUND HANDLING

FUEL, FLEET MANAGEMENT

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Products and Services:

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www.turkishtechnic.com

Activities:
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Web site: www.dabico.com
Managing Director: Mr. Juergen Strommer

Activities
Aviation: Global Manufacturer of Aircraft 400Hz Power System, Pre-Condition Air (PCA) System, Technical Pits System (Pop-Up and Hatch Type); designer and systems integrator of specialized apron services equipment providing air, fuel, power and water to Aircraft.

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AVIATION SAFETY & SECURITY

- ACCESS CONTROL
- ALARMS
- TURNKEY SOLUTIONS, IT SUPPORT
- EQUIPMENT, COMPONENTS SUPPLIES
- FIRE CONTROL SYSTEMS & TRAINING
- SAFETY & SECURITY

ACCESS CONTROL

ALARMS

TURNKEY SOLUTIONS, IT SUPPORT

EQUIPMENT, COMPONENTS SUPPLIES

FIRE CONTROL SYSTEMS & TRAINING

SAFETY & SECURITY

DABICO airport solutions

Dabico Airport Solutions Bahrain Branch
Flat 24, Building -47, Road 302
Block 103, Hidd
Al Hidd, Muharraq Governorate
Bahrain

Contact: Mr. Hani Sebeh
Mobile: +973 36762416
Website: www.dabico.com

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- AVIATION SERVICES
- BANKING, INSURANCE, LEGAL SERVICES
- CABIN SUPPLIES
- IT SUPPORT, SOLUTIONS
- MANUFACTURER, INTERIORS

- AIRCRAFT SALES
- AIR TRAFFIC CONTROLS
- AVIATION SERVICES
- BANKING, INSURANCE, LEGAL SERVICES
- CABIN SUPPLIES
- IT SUPPORT, SOLUTIONS
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6WB-844, Dubai Airport Freezone
P. O. Box 293750, Dubai
United Arab Emirates
Email: salesuae@skyplan.com
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ACTIVITIES:
Skytools, Aviation Fuel, Flight Planning
Permits & Slots, Weather Breifing

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Products and Services:
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- Aircraft Batteries & Tires
- Cables & Harness Solutions
- GSE, Tools & Lubricants

FAI rent-a-jet

FAI rent-a-jet GmbH
Flughafenstrasse 124
90411 Nuernberg, Germany
Tel. +49 911 36009-0
E-mail: info@fai.ag

Dubai Branch Office:
FAI rent-a-jet GmbH, DMCC Branch
Jumeirah Lake Towers, X2 Tower
Office 3204, P.O.Box 31425
Dubai, UAE
Tel. +971 4 452 2422
E-mail: dubai@fai.ag

Activities
Aircraft Operator, Executive & Air Ambulance Charter Services, Aircraft Management, Aircraft Sales & Leasing, Maintenance.

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Fax: +971 65388558
E-mail: info@skyone.aero

Activities:
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Aviation Fuel Services
Ground Handling Services
Flight Permit Support
Aircraft Solutions
Aircraft Management
Network Airline Management

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AVIATION TRAINING & RECRUITMENTS

- AIRCRAFT COLLEGE/TRAINING
- AVIATION RECRUITMENT AGENCIES
- FLYING SCHOOL
- TRAINING ENGINEERING
- TRAINING CABIN CREW

- AIRCRAFT MANAGEMENT
- AIRPORT CONTRACTORS, SUPPLIES, SERVICES
- EQUIPMENTS/ COMPONENTS/ SPARES
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www.p7aviation.com

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- Pilot Training
- MCC Training
- Additional Training

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GROUND HANDLING

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- AIRPORT CONTRACTORS, SUPPLIES, SERVICES
- EQUIPMENTS/COMPONENTS/SPARES
- FLIGHT PLANNING/MANAGEMENT
- GROUND HANDLING SERVICES
- WEATHER FORECASTING SERVICES

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Aviation Fuel Services
Ground Handling Services
Flight Permit Support
Aircraft Solutions
Aircraft Management
Network Airline Management

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Activities
Aviation: Global Manufacturer of Aircraft 400Hz Power System, Pre-Condition Air (PCA) System, Technical Pits System (Pop-Up and Hatch Type); designer and systems integrator of specialized apron services equipment providing air, fuel, power and water to Aircraft.

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- FLEET MANGEMENT
- HELICOPTER SERVICES
- HELICOPTER MANUFACTURER CIVIL & DEFENSE
- MAINTENANCE REPAIR & OVERHAUL (MRO)
- SPARE PARTS & ACCESSORIES

- AVIATION SERVICES CHARTER LEASING
- FLEET MANGEMENT
- HELICOPTER SERVICES
- HELICOPTER MANUFACTURER CIVIL & DEFENSE
- MAINTENANCE REPAIR & OVERHAUL (MRO)
- SPARE PARTS & ACCESSORIES

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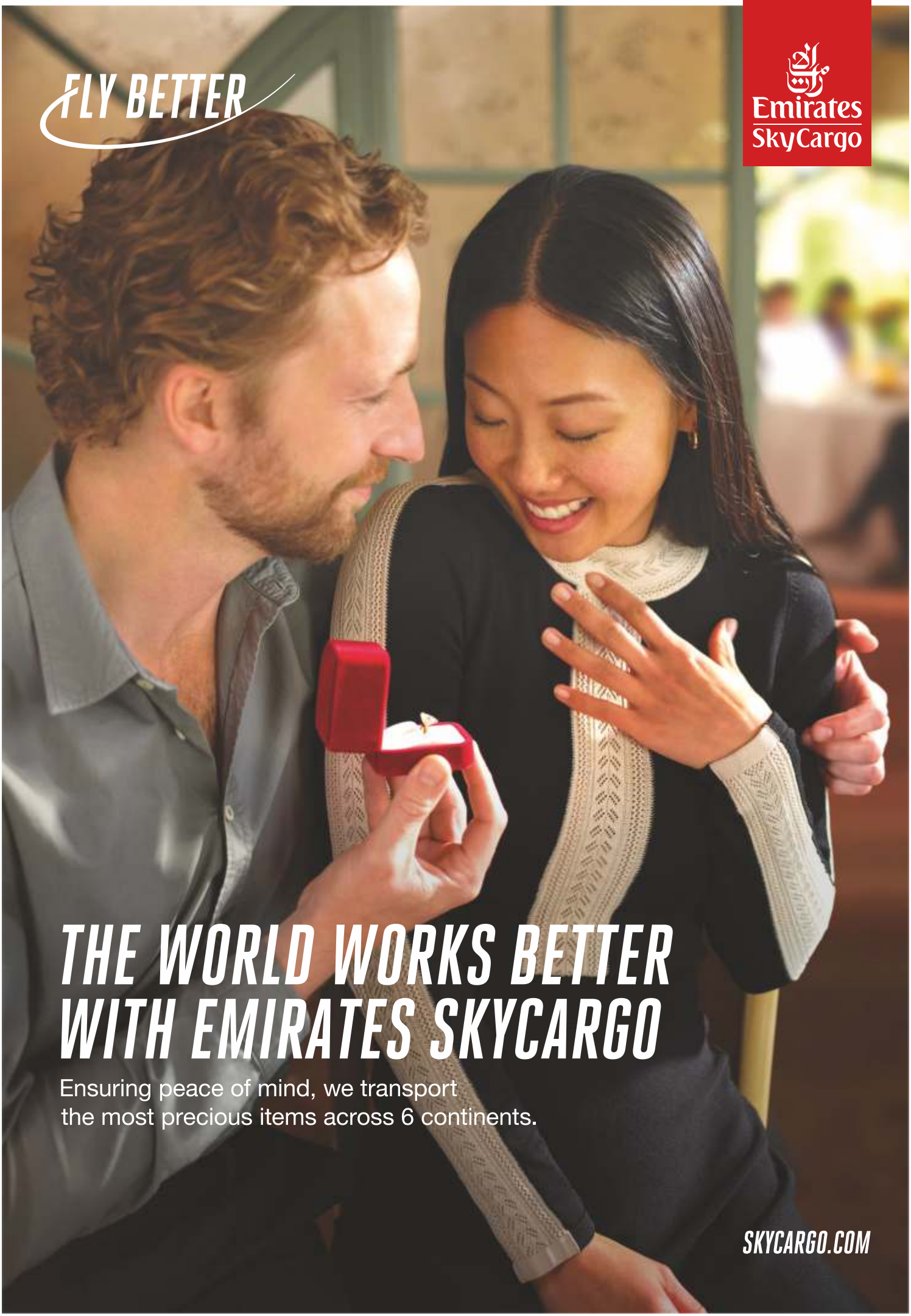
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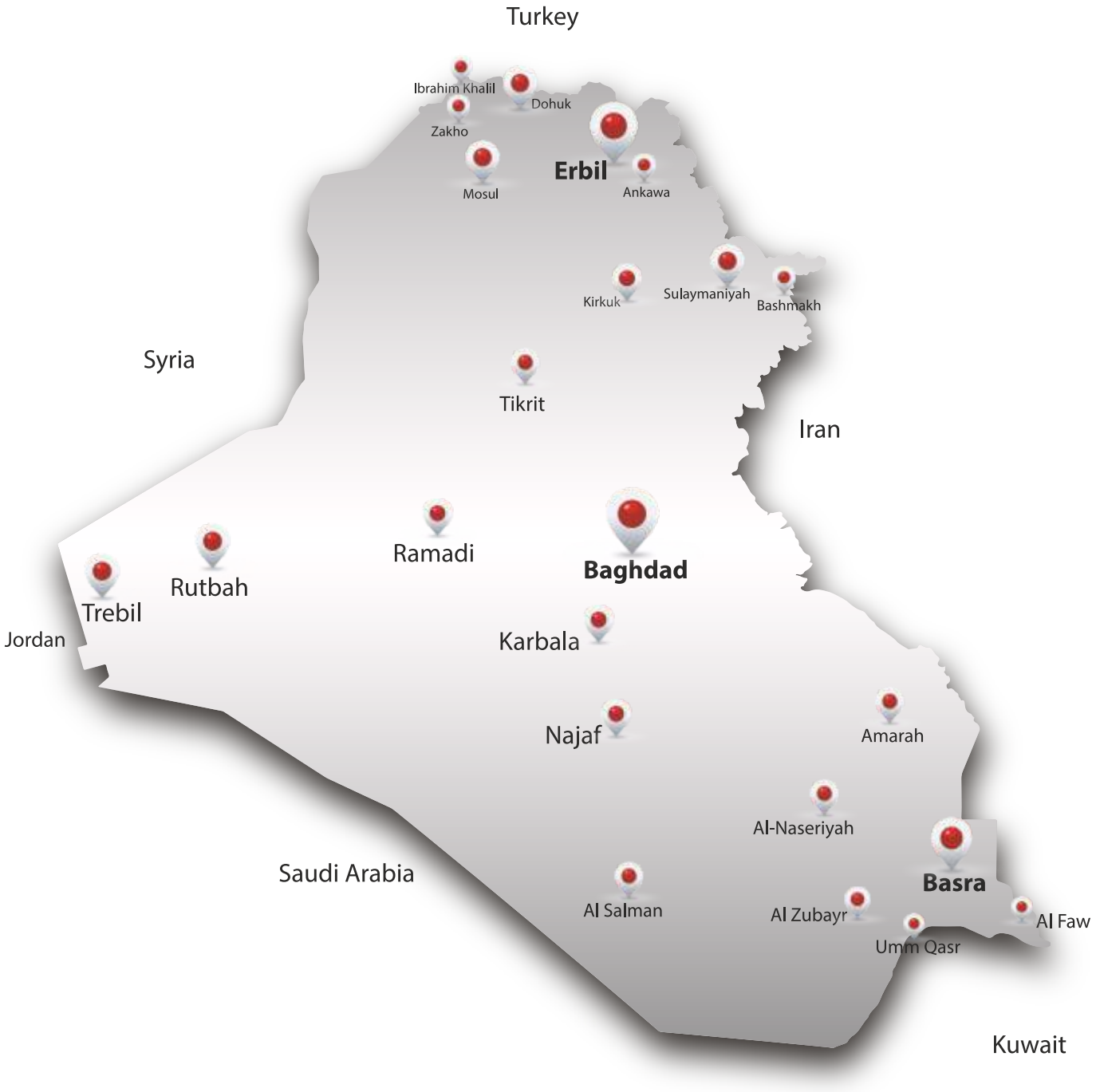

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